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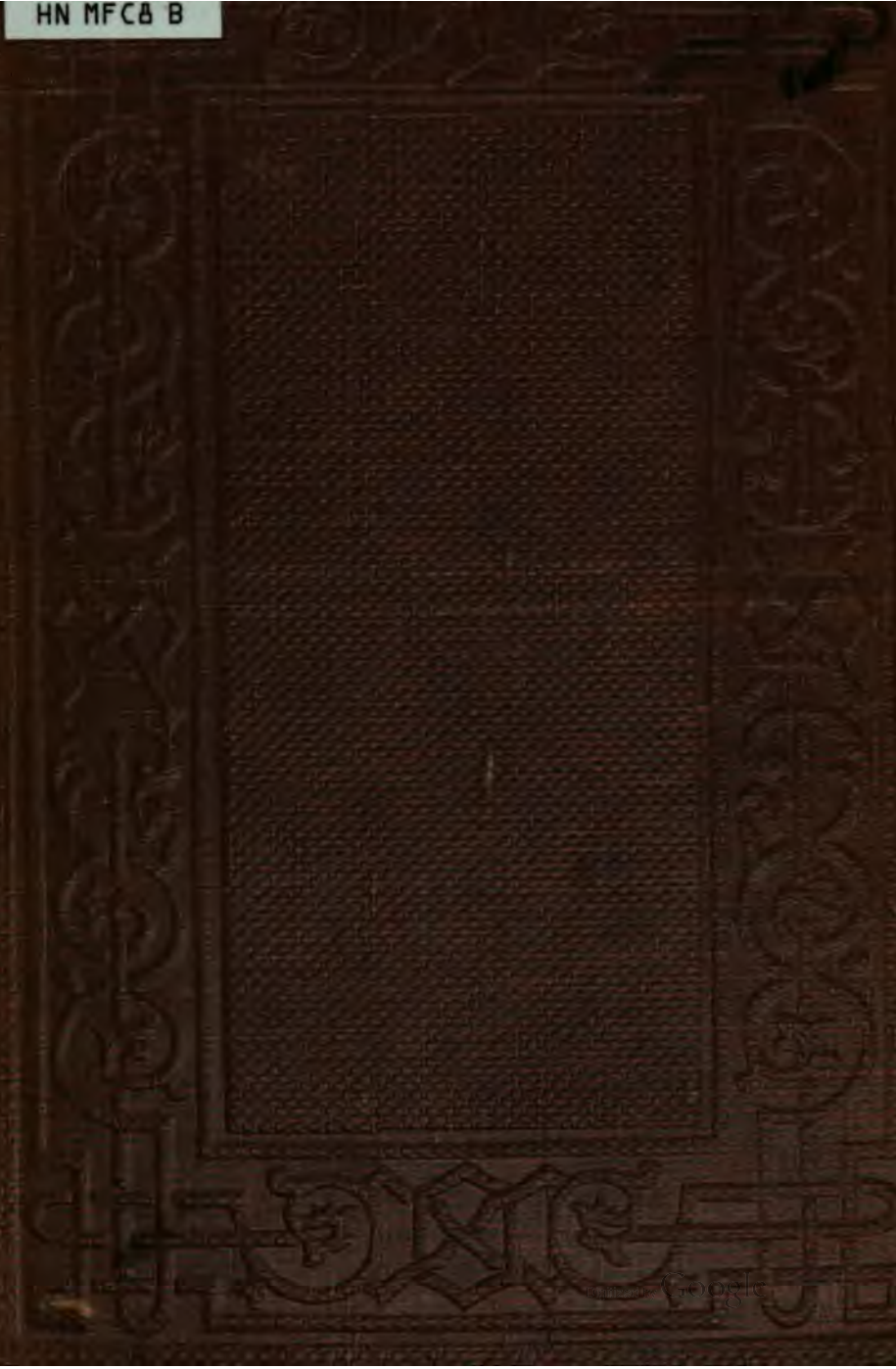
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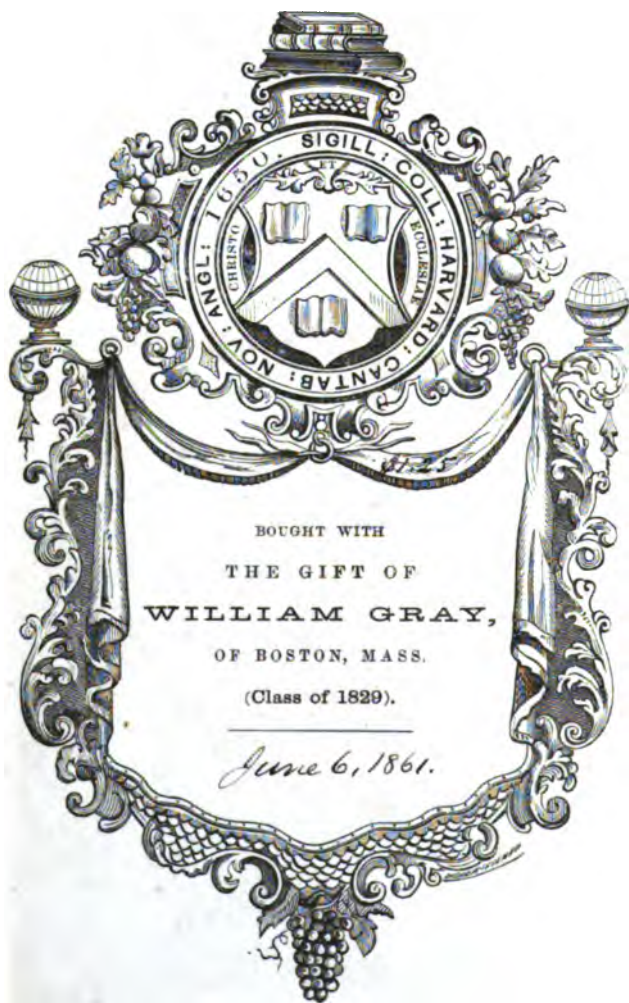
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THE
FRIENDLY DISPUTANTS;
OR,
FUTURE PUNISHMENT RECONSIDERED.

By AURA, *Author of "The Future of the Human Race"*
AUTHOR OF "ASHEBURN."

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Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us,
But unto thy name give glory,
For thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.

BALLANTYNE AND COMPANY, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH.

PREFACE.

IN treating on its various sides a highly important branch of theological inquiry, I feel it incumbent on me to state, that the view which is here finally propounded did not, either in its theological or its philosophical aspect, originate with myself, but with one who has now passed beyond this mortal scene—my revered father, who died at the close of 1855. It is necessary that I should state that, some years before his death, he being deeply absorbed in a new English translation of the New Testament, I undertook a work similar to the present in object, though not in form. Circumstances obliged the dropping of that design, but not before I had obtained most valuable assistance from him towards the projected work, of which I have availed myself in

the present one. As to what here is strictly *his*, I may, in the first place, mention that all the exegetical and philological matter was either directly or indirectly supplied by him, and much of it is here given in his own words. The paper entitled "Examination of the Five Passages," &c., was entirely written by him; also the "*Supplementary Notes*" on Dr Hamilton's work on "Rewards and Punishments;" and the paper "On the Case of Judas." Besides all this, I am indebted to my father for many of the other arguments and thoughts here adduced, which, however, highly as they were appreciated by me, are here necessarily so interwoven with what is my own, as only to admit of this general public acknowledgment.

As respects the form in which the thoughts here given are presented to the public, some will object to the admixture, slight though it be, with the solemnities of theological investigation of the lightness of fiction, while others will complain of the heaviness and abstruseness of the metaphysical element. In reply to the first objection, I shall simply state, that it was from no light motive that the choice was made, no desire to

catch at popularity, and conform to the supposed spirit of the age, but from the sincere conviction that, whatever be its relation to the *abstract best*, this form was the one in which (under the genial influence of the *con amore*) the writer herself could best succeed in elucidating the views which she desired to communicate.

In answer to the second objection, I venture to appropriate a sentence in Bishop Butler's preface to his "Fifteen Sermons," &c. "It must be acknowledged that some of the following discourses are very abstruse and difficult, or, if you please, obscure. But I must take leave to add, that those alone are judges whether or no and how far this is a fault, who are judges whether or no and how far it might have been avoided—those only who will be at the trouble to understand what is here said, and to see how far the things here insisted upon, *and not other things*, might have been put in a plainer manner; which yet I am very far from asserting that they could not."

Turning from the Authors' part in this undertaking to that which now devolves upon their

readers, let me, in all humility and love, urge upon these, that, partiality and suspicion on their side being alike removed, they seek to come with minds unclogged to examine, and hearts open to appreciate, the questions about to be discussed. If what is written is true, it will thus best become truth to them ; if it is erroneous, they will thus become most clearly and calmly sure that it is so.

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THE FRIENDLY DISPUTANTS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION—MR SOMERS' CHALLENGE—ANTANACLASIS—FUTURE BLISS OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

THE wedding took place in early spring, and was succeeded by days of almost celestial loveliness. The face of Nature was so loving and so glad that her promises appeared as serene as her fulfilments. The bursting leaf and opening flower were full of rich and assured beauty, bounded only by a mystery more rich, more beautiful, and more assured. The very ground was fragrant; but the choicer fragrance which sprang from unseen flower-blooms spoke to them of the hidden sources of joy which this world contains, not to be traced to their earthly source, but only known in their effects and in their First Great Cause. And the melody of the birds and other joyous earthly sounds seemed to tell them that the bliss which filled their hearts, new as it was to them, was no strange thing in the universe of God, but all in harmony with its first and eternal law.

And if they turned from the full present towards the still empty future, and remembered that in the mosaic of

life joy seldom touches and fits in with joy, but each bright pattern is embedded in a dark ground of sadness, still was their souls' serenity unimpaired; for they held their bliss so directly from the hand and heart of God, that they scarcely could feel anything strange which that hand could give, or that heart assign.

They were now in the midst of the Welsh mountains, and were approaching the scene of the bride's birth and early childhood.

"Oh, I knew I should recognise them!" she exclaimed. "Though so many years have passed, the outline of that range seems quite familiar."

"You were only eight years old, you told me, when you left your infant home?"

"Yes; we left it two days before my birth-day," and she heaved a deep sigh.

"Do you regret the past, Elizabeth?"

"No; but I wish for your sake I was younger," and her eyes, before so beaming, were suffused with tears.

For this her husband chid her. "Lilly, who gave us to each other? Did not He who destined us for one another, appoint also the time of our union? For my part, I would not have had it a day earlier."

"Ah, Frederic! But what I meant was, what you cannot deny, that youth, and freshness, and beauty are charming things, and the heart itself prizes them. *Your's* would have prized them.

"It *does* prize them, for you possess them still. Have I not assured you so before?"

"Yes; but so soon to lose them!"

"I shall not miss them. I am confident of that. Yet it were vain to deny that, in itself, it had been better that our mutual love had sprung up and been consum-

mated while more of life and youth were before us, and that these long years when we have met had been years of soul-blending and not of soul separation. But then, tell me this, my Lilly, would you say to a friend who presented you with a gift, 'That is a beautiful and precious thing; but just because it is beautiful and precious you should have given it me long ago?'"

"No, indeed!" said Elizabeth with a smile.

"Let us never, then, receive the gifts of God with an ungraciousness we should be ashamed to shew towards our fellow-men. Besides, perhaps we have gained more from our separation than we have lost. Not only did our necessary discipline render us fitter for heaven and God, but fitter, too, for our married life and one another. As for yourself, you know you had a great deal to learn and to unlearn in the inner life, and, perhaps, the thirty-three years were not too much to do it in. First, you were taught to prize creature love; then, to resign it; and lastly, to enjoy it aright. It is true, part of the process might have been carried on after marriage; but [a smile playing round his lips] I am as well pleased, I must confess, it was completed before. I have no wish to be an idol removed, even to be afterwards reinstated in a truer position. And if I long occupied but an humble place in your affections, dear wife, the compensation was ample when your heart said to me, 'Friend, come up higher.' I had not such a complicated lesson to learn as you; but still it is only within this year or two, perhaps I should say only this very year, I was ready for my treasure. I do not think it possible I should have *known* you as I now do at any period of my life, and not have loved you; but I should not have prized you equally without these last years of heart-

blank. You look surprised; but, spite of my outward cheerfulness and equanimity, it really was the case. So, as soon as I was ready for her, my sweet bride was ready for me. And if, meanwhile, she had been shorn of some of the personal charms which, when they met my eye, failed to reach my heart, she had been the more fitted, by matured grace and inward adornment, to meet my soul's embrace."

The readers of Ashburn will not have failed to recognise in this newly wedded pair their former old friends, Elizabeth Howard and Frederic Somers. But let not this introduction mislead.—Not now as before are we to trace the workings of their separate souls; nor must we follow the meanderings of their now blended lives. Another task is ours; and Frederic and Elizabeth are henceforth to appear before us almost solely in a new capacity—one which a few paragraphs of introductory narration will serve to make known.

It had been planned that, after spending a fortnight in Wales, Mr and Mrs Somers should proceed to visit friends of his at Liverpool; but they soon found that one fortnight would by no means be a sufficient time for seclusion and each other's sole society, and they delayed their visit for another. At first the weather was, as we said, uninterruptedly lovely, but then it became broken. There were hours of sunshine, succeeded by hours of rain. During the former they had some delightful rambles, but the latter, too, were turned to as good account. The first rainy afternoon Elizabeth said, "I, for my part, am not sorry to see the rain; for I am in hopes, Frederic, you will fulfil your promise of initiating me into those fuller truths relative to future punishment."

"Dear Lilly!" said he; "you rejoice me by that

proposal. You remind me of that which will make our mutual love truly noble and permanent. We are not to rest in the exquisite delight of each other's society, nor even in that thought full of delicious repose that each, after a long wandering, has found in the other the heart's goal. We must still turn, *but now together*, our most earnest and delighted gaze on those sublime truths which are independent of all individual relations."

Elizabeth, in a low solemn tone, exclaimed, "Eternal, all embracing truth!"

"But," said Frederic, as they were about fairly to begin the theological disquisition alluded to, "what if I should fail to convince you? What if, in this very beginning of the honeymoon, something should spring up to separate our hearts?"

"No," said Elizabeth, in a tone of quiet confidence, "that will not be. Though we should continue to differ in opinion, our hearts would be in unison. But I quite expect you will make a convert of me. Not that I shall believe this or anything else because you do so. You must not reckon on that. Affection has great power over me, but not that power. But my *feelings* were always much the same as yours with respect to this question, and I know enough of the grounds of your belief to be disposed to adopt it."

We shall not detail to the reader the lengthened conjugal discussions which ensued, intending to give subsequently the truths then elicited in a different form. We shall now simply mention that the result was as regards herself such as Elizabeth expected. She not only adopted with full intellectual appreciation her husband's opinions, but threw into them her whole heart and soul.

The friends they were now about to visit, were Mr

and Mrs Merton, to whom the readers of Ashburn have already been introduced. Mr Merton was an old fellow-collegian, and much attached friend of Mr Somers. He had been but a little more than a year married to his present wife, and she had still to make the acquaintance of both Mr Somers and his bride. Mr Merton had originally studied with a view to one of the learned professions; but, a peculiarly favourable opening having presented itself in the mercantile line, he had adopted it, and was now settled in a pretty villa in the outskirts of Liverpool.

The visit was a somewhat formidable one to Elizabeth. She knew in what high estimation Frederic was held by Mr and Mrs Merton, and how much must be *wished* for, perhaps expected from his wife. But Frederic in this matter, as he generally did when she referred anything to him, succeeded in allaying her anxieties. "As for Merton," he said, "he is the most genial fellow alive. You might be much less attractive and superior than you are, my Lilly, and still I should not be uneasy at introducing you to him. He has excellent abilities, and much discrimination of character; but his perfect and unalterable good-humour, keeps him so well satisfied with himself, and all and every one around him, that he is by no means a formidable man. I have no personal acquaintance with Mrs Merton, but her husband wrote to me pretty fully about her at the time of his engagement, and I feel sure you and she will be very good friends."

Elizabeth, in whose composition, by a kind provision of nature, a tendency to confide in others counteracted in a great measure undue anxiety and deficient self-esteem—began now to feel quite at her ease in the prospect of

spending some weeks with her husband's friends. All remaining misgivings were removed by their kind, open-hearted welcome, while their natural congeniality and the bond of circumstance soon established a real friendship between all the parties.

One morning soon after the arrival of our hero and heroine, a certain friend of the Mertons was mentioned as a peculiar but very excellent, pious man. "It is very much to be regretted, however," said Mrs Merton, "that he holds some very erroneous opinions with regard to a particular doctrine."

"He does not believe in the eternity of future punishments," said Mrs Merton. Frederic sighed, then looked at his wife, and seeing a peculiar kind of eagerness and anxiety in her expression, smiled and said, "My little wife is, I know, dying for me to tell you something. She thinks we are in a measure in a false position towards you until I have told you of a change in my sentiments during these last few months. Will you be much shocked, Merton, when I tell you that I, too, disbelieve in the doctrine of eternal misery?"

Mrs Merton changed countenance. Her husband was silent for a moment, and then said, "I am sure, Somers, you can never be anything but conscientious in any of your opinions."

"When I speak of my sentiments being changed indeed," said Frederic, "I hardly refer to the merely negative opinion I have just mentioned; for never since I began to think at all on religious subjects, could I harbour the idea of eternal punishment. The doctrine clashed so entirely with my inmost persuasions relative to the character of God, that I felt certain it could hold no place in a revelation coming from Him. My subse-

quent acquaintance with Greek, shewed me that what had been regarded as New Testament testimony in its favour, was little to be relied on, the words being susceptible of other renderings."

"I know you so well, my dear Fred.," said Mr Merton, "and am so convinced that neither your safety nor your sanctity will be impaired by any doctrinal mistake you may fall into, that, so far as you are personally concerned, I don't much care what you believe in the matter. But then you are such an influential man.—Ah yes! It is rather a serious thing," he added, shaking his head, "for you to take up an important error."

"Well then," said Frederic smiling, "prove to me that it is an error. Shew me why I ought to believe in eternal misery. I shall leave the *onus probandi* with you; and I know you dearly love an argument."

"In that, I fancy, we are pretty well matched," said Mr Merton, laughing, "as, I doubt not, the ladies will agree. Very well, I accept your challenge; and I do so the more willingly as I know, candid fellow as you are, if I fail, you will allow it may be owing, not to the weakness of my cause, but that of my advocacy."

Frederic put on a look of pretended perplexity; then, as he generally did when amused, casting a side-glance at Elizabeth, "I can bear witness," said she, "to his fully appreciating the distinction; but, in the present instance, I fancy he thinks the advocate is better than the cause."

"Not that I would ascribe to him the talent of making the worse appear the better reason. I have detected no such adroitness as that in my friend. He *thinks* the cause a good one or he would not embrace it."

"And he will *prove* it so, I expect," said Mrs Merton.

Frederic turned towards her and said, "You will not object, Merton, to our including the ladies in our discourse. I, for my part, expect not a little aid from my Elizabeth here, and Mrs Merton—"

"Mrs Merton must stay out of the room," said she, laughing, "if she is expected to keep silence."

After a little more *badinage*, Elizabeth said, "It is you that have to begin, Frederic. I am longing for the argument to begin."

"Well, you have to shew us, my friend Will, what good reasons you can produce for believing in the eternal misery of the impenitent?"

"My reason is short and simple. It is because I see it to be explicitly declared in the Word of God. I know it is the fashion of the present day, even amongst men who, after their own fashion, are *very religious*, to speak slightly of the words of Scripture. They call themselves pre-eminently spiritual indeed, and if they disparage the *letter*, it is to do higher honour to the *spirit* of the Bible. But I must confess I have no sympathy with such a mode of procedure. It appears to me about as wise as it would be to set aside the facts of Nature out of deference to her laws. The laws of Nature, as existing in the Divine mind, are indeed in themselves independent of and superior to her facts, and to some limited extent may be supplied from our own minds independently; but to set the one in opposition to the other, or even to despise the aid of the one in the elimination of the other, we should all feel to be absurd. But no less so do I regard it in respect to the other revelation."

Frederic.—"I entirely agree with you in that matter.

Words are the representatives of ideas; and the rule must ever hold good that, if in any case they fail to represent *the exactly true idea*, they must embody one that is *tant soit peu*—false. I mean, of course, with reference to the standard of absolute truth; and that is the only one which it concerns us to look to in the case of a revelation from God. Whether the sacred penmen did or did not write according to their own *conceptions* of truth was their personal concern, not ours. I feel it impossible to doubt the verbal inspiration of Scripture, nor, therefore, could I escape, if I would, from the strict infallibility of its letter. But then it remains to ascertain what is the doctrine of the letter of Scripture on any particular point, for instance the one we are now considering.”

Mrs Merton repeated—“These shall go away into everlasting punishment.”

Fred.—“Yes, to the English reader that is very conclusive. But it is known to all Greek scholars, and is not denied by controvertists on the eternalist side, that the word *αιωνιος* (*aiōnios*), here employed in the original, is susceptible of a variety of meanings. *Αιων* (*aiōn*), too, and the other words with which we have to do in this controversy, are universally conceded to bear philologically other meanings than that of strict eternity.”

Mr M.—“Certainly. There is no Greek scholar but must admit that these words are continually used in the New Testament itself, as well as in secular writers, in an inferior, *i. e.* in a limited sense, and there is no Greek lexicon but will prove it. But then there are other expressions, such as ‘the worm that dieth not,’ and ‘the fire that is not quenched,’ which, by clearly proving the doctrine, bind down the meaning here also

to that of eternal suffering. It is a great mistake to suppose that, because a word simply, philologically considered, admits of a variety of meanings, therefore it is impossible to determine positively what its particular meaning in a certain passage is. The context or other texts may remove all ambiguity."

Fred.—"Assuredly. I acknowledge that to be a perfectly correct principle, though I differ with you in the application. I must return by and by to the texts you have quoted. Meantime, I wish to impress, especially on Mrs Merton's mind, the great importance of the admission, the unavoidable admission, made, that so far as these words, rendered by our translators, *everlasting, eternal, for ever, &c.*, taken by themselves, are concerned, there is no necessity for understanding them in the unlimited sense of eternity as applied to the punishment of the wicked."

Mrs M.—"But if these words are so ambiguous in this case, they must be the same as applied to the happiness of the righteous."

Fred.—"No doubt it is so, taking them simply philologically. But you must remember the principle a little while ago laid down by your husband, that it is quite possible, considering the nature of the case, to tie down a word in a certain passage to a particular meaning, or to reject a particular meaning in others. Applying this rule, I hope to be able to prove that the word *αιωνιος* (*aiōnios*) does not mean eternal when qualifying the punishment of the wicked (as that would be to contradict the express testimony of other parts of Scripture, to say nothing of the character of God), but that it does mean strictly eternal in other passages as applied to the happiness or life of the righteous."

Mrs M.—"But in that particular passage in the 25th of Matthew, it must have the same meaning when describing the lot of the righteous and of the wicked, as both occur in the same verse."

Fred. (smiling)—"No, that is not a sound argument. There are many instances in Scripture of the same word being used in a varying sense in the same or adjoining verses."

Mrs M.—"That appears to me very extraordinary."

Elizabeth.—"In that verse, 'Let the dead bury their dead,' this is clearly the case. The first time it means the spiritually dead."

Fred.—"There is another instance which perhaps will strike you as still more appropriate. In the last chapter of Romans—will you turn it up?—you will find in two succeeding verses—the 25th and 26th—two combinations of the very adjective we are considering. The first expression, which is rendered there, 'Since the *world* began,' is, in the Greek, *χρονος αιωνιος* (*chronos aiōnios*), the other is *του αιωνιου Θεου* (*tou aiōniou Theou*), 'of the everlasting God.' Now it has never been maintained, that in these two places the word bears the same meaning. The same may be said of that passage in the third chapter of Habakkuk, where it is said, 'The perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting.' Here our translators have varied the expression; but the same word is used in the original. The sense, however, is clearly different in the two cases. The word previously translated *everlasting*, as applied to the mountains, is a different one in the Hebrew, but subject to the same latitude of meaning; for the same rule applies to all the ancient languages more or less.

"This mode of writing, using the same word diffe-

rently in two clauses, was so frequent amongst the Greeks, that they had two terms for it, *antanaclasis* and *ploke*. So that the objection which has been urged, I allow, Mrs Merton, not only by yourself, but by many a Greek scholar, that it is absurd to suppose *aionios* to bear two different meanings in that verse in Matthew, requires us to believe that the Greeks had a name for a thing which had no existence in practice. The fact is, [turning to Mr M.] that the genius and practice of the language would have forbidden the repetition of the adjective in a case like this, unless with a difference of meaning. This is what I maintain. When the sense is the same, and there is no special reason, such as the producing of emphasis, for instance, to deviate from the natural mode of expression, the adjective is always given only once."

"I don't understand that: do you?" said Mrs Merton, turning to Elizabeth.

"Yes. I think it might be illustrated by an example in our own language. We can either say, 'The house is handsome, and the furniture is handsome;' or we might express the adjective only once, and say, 'The house and the furniture are handsome.' But, my husband says, as *handsome* here is used in both cases in the same sense, according to the Greek idiom you could only say, 'The house and the furniture are handsome.' And so in these passages in Matthew, according to the usual doctrine, the Greek should have been, 'These shall go into punishment, but the righteous into life—*aïōnios*, or eternal.'"

"I understand now."

"It struck me lately," said Elizabeth, addressing her husband, "that we have some trace of this same rule in English. For instance, you could easily say, 'He has a

handsome stud and equipage;' but you would scarcely say, 'He has a handsome face and fortune.' It would be more natural to say, 'He has a handsome face and a handsome fortune.'"

Fred.—"Exactly. That is an interesting discovery of yours."

Mr M.—"I must consider more particularly the philological principle you have enunciated. I do not now recollect a case in point."

Mrs M.—"I must confess, I should be sorry to think my hopes for eternal life rested on so doubtful a philological principle."

"They need not rest on that," said Frederic. "I appeal to you, William, does your hope for eternity hinge on the meaning of the word *aionios*?"

"No, no!" said he thoughtfully, looking down.

"But be that as it may, my dear Mrs Merton, I would have you, even at the present stage, examine not so much the correctness of your hope, as the honesty of it. It may be God's will to grant or to continue to you all the certainty of assurance you could desire, but see that you gain or retain it *honestly*. If you think that the ambiguity of the word *aionios*, and kindred terms, endangers your hope of eternal life, let not that thought shut your eyes to the ambiguity. Your wishes and hopes, you know, can in no way alter the facts of the case; do not let them affect your views of these facts."

Mrs Merton looked down, and a tear trembled in her eye.

Elizabeth said gently, "I sympathise much with Mrs Merton in hearing, perhaps for the first time, something that seems to endanger so precious a hope. You know, Frederic, it is often harder to part with a possession of

which we long have felt secure than to continue resigned to an evil to which we have become accustomed. But, dear Mrs Merton, if you had long contemplated the two alternatives, or could come back freshly to them, I do think, from what I know of you, that you would come deliberately to prefer, if you were reduced to that, the idea of the righteous being perfectly happy for a limited time, and their bliss then ending with their being, if the wicked might also be released from their wretched existence, to the thought of one portion of God's creation being eternally happy, and another eternally, *eternally* miserable."

"But we hope, do we not," said Frederic, "to be able to convince both our dear friends that God has something far better in store for His universe than the best of these alternatives?"

"I have been going over in my mind, dear Laura," said her husband, "the grounds of the Christian's hope, and they are very strong. We are joint-heirs with Christ. Christ the heir cannot be disinherited, and neither can we. 'Our life is hid with Christ in God,' and bound up, as it were, in His, since He has said, 'Because I live, ye shall live also.'"

"It is said of the inheritance of the saints," said Elizabeth, "that it is 'incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away.' How very much too, more surely than we require to prove the present point, there is in that beautiful passage where St Paul expresses his Divinely inspired persuasion 'that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor *things to come*, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Rom. viii. 38, 39). This could not have been said if death at last was to

come and to tear them away not only from God, but from being itself."

Fred.—"Assuredly not. Such express promises are doubtless very precious; but we scarcely needed them to trust in a consummation which alone agrees with the design of the atonement and the character of God. If man, puny and changeable as he is, is dissatisfied with and despises the transient; if he who, like the flower of the field, to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, aspires to produce works which shall endure to the remotest time, is it conceivable that the eternal God shall not produce something satisfactory and stable, to be His joy and His repose throughout His own eternity? Shall He, the Faithful one, who forsakes not His creature during its time of imperfection and change, preserving, in His own idea at least, its individuality intact amidst all vicissitudes—shall He lose that creature at last in the mass of nothingness? The thing is incredible in the highest degree.—I should like now, Merton, to sum up what I think you must concede to us after our discussion to-night. There is no lexicographical necessity to understand this famous passage in Matthew, or others like it—in other words, they do not *explicitly* declare the everlasting torments of the wicked. If we have external and additional reasons for giving to the word *aionios*, as applied to the life of the righteous, the meaning our translators have assigned to it of *eternal*, this does not by implication require us to do the same in the other clause, as there are indubitable instances in Scripture (and one instance would suffice) of a word being used in two clauses of the same verse in a varying acceptation; if even you cannot go along with me in saying that the repetition of the adjective rather leads to the conclusion that the sense is different."

Mr M.—"I cannot think that the force of so doubtful a principle of interpretation can be of any avail against the evidence *ab extra*, which can also be brought to prove the eternity of future woe."

Fred.—"That is the point which we must next proceed to consider."

Mr M.—"Yes; we must begin our discussion earlier to-morrow evening."

They then parted for the night. When they were alone, Frederic said to Elizabeth, "Well, we are fairly in for it now." "Yes," said she, going up to the fire and kneeling down before it, "it is quite exciting." He too walked up to the fire, and stood looking into it. Elizabeth looked up in his face, and saw it had a pensive expression. He was silent a few minutes, and then turning to her, said, "Ah! my Elizabeth, it is a grand thing to possess truth—a sublime privilege! But like other riches, truth brings a burden with it."

She rose and stood by his side, and leaning her head against his shoulder, said, "Do you think they will love us less? Will they love *you* less? But he has known you long. He really *knows* you."

"Yes! but still I feel that, if I do not convince him, we shall be in a measure separated. It will not be as in former times. Ah, Lilly! Friendship in those days of impetuous enthusiasm is a beautiful, a glorious thing! I may speak to you of this now. I scarcely could before, because I knew you had not been so favoured. But now *my* past happiness has become yours. My friendship with Merton was a bright, unshadowed thing. There was not a hope nor a memory, not a sorrow nor a joy, not an *error* nor a *truth* to separate us, nor to divide the current of our mutual enthusiasm."

"Such is life!" said Elizabeth with a sigh. "But I think you will convince them. Why should you not?"

He smiled, and gently shook his head.

"I am sanguine, I know. But there is such a thing as inducing other people to change their opinions. There is such a thing as being a bearer of truth to others."

"Yes, there is. But my own experience has afforded so many instances—not in reference to this particular truth, but others—of strong, unanswerable arguments being laid before the mind of another, clearly and inoffensively stated, and yet the result has been that even candid minds have rejected that truth, and apparently remained unaffected by it—that I must confess I am not sanguine. However, do not suppose I am without hope. Let us together, dearest wife, carry this matter before God. If we with one heart implore His blessing, we may the more hope to obtain it."

CHAPTER II.

FREDERIC A DESTRUCTIONIST—*WORM AND FIRE*—FIG-
MENT OF INHERENT INDESTRUCTIBILITY CONSIDERED
—SCRIPTURE TESTIMONY IN FAVOUR OF DESTRUC-
TION.

WHEN the friends met the next day there was no allusion to the last night's conversation. It constantly recurred to the minds of all; but each thought it more satisfactory, more kind and delicate to forbear reference to the subject, till it could be heartily resumed in the evening.

When the tea-things were removed, the children (Mr Merton's children by his first marriage) had gone to bed, and the ladies had produced their work, Mr Merton said, "Now, Frederic, you are to tell us what you make of those texts which speak of the worm and the fire."

Fred.—"But first we must speak of that passage in Matt. xxv. And here I have to confess that, while I unhesitatingly reject the common translation of that clause—'*These shall go away into everlasting punishment*'—I waver still between two others. One of these is life-long. *Life-long* is not at all an uncommon meaning of *aionios*, and the rendering is quite in accordance with my views; but on the whole I rather incline to another meaning as in this place answering better. As the Latins from *caput*, the head, *life*, had *capitalis*, mortal, deadly, so from *aion*,

of which a very common meaning is a man's life, we very naturally may obtain for *aionios* the meaning of destructive of life. I therefore would render the clause, 'These shall go into *destructive* punishment.' But if you prefer the word *life-long*, for which there is certainly more authority, it comes to the same thing."

Mrs M.—"I see, then, you are not a Universalist like Mr Lloyd. He thinks that all men will be saved, and be happy at last."

Fred.—"I shall tell you by degrees what I believe. Meantime, I will begin by telling you I believe in the destruction of the souls of the impenitent—their actual annihilation."

Mrs M.—"I don't think that is much gain over the common doctrine."

Fred.—"Do you not? To me it seems an immeasurable gain; so much so, that, as Elizabeth said yesterday, I could willingly forego some of the certainty of my own future hope to obtain a glimpse of such a reprieve. I should think it a good exchange to part with the positive for the merely negative evil."

Mr M.—"I must confess that I have always had a prejudice against the doctrine of annihilation; partly, I daresay, from its having been such a favourite one with infidels."

Fred.—"So far as it rests on that ground, it is indeed a prejudice, and the sooner you get rid of it the better. If there is anything in the thing itself preferable to the common view, and more conformable to common sense and conscience, it is not surprising it should have been adopted by men who only consult these guides, and do not bow to the authority of a revelation which is supposed to teach otherwise."

Mrs M.—"But the very fact that bad men prefer this, seems to me an argument against it."

Fred.—"What do you mean? Do you mean that men would prefer it for themselves? And is that a reason why God should not inflict it on them? Because his boy would rather be struck with the cane than have his flesh lacerated with the scourge, will the kind Father, therefore, prefer the latter? We may be quite sure that God will act like a kind and wise Father towards all His offspring, and not inflict a severer punishment than is necessary."

Elizabeth.—"I cannot but think, however, that there is some force in those objections. There seems to be a certain desperate satisfaction in the idea of annihilation in some characters, which leads them on in a reckless course of sin, regardless of any of the evils it may bring upon them, because there is always the resource of suicide at hand. And it seems as if the mere prospect of annihilation, the very thing they desire, would be powerless to deter such men from sin and crime."

Fred.—"I question much when men have become the slaves of their own propensities and passions, if the prospect of any future retribution, whether it be hell or destruction, is of much avail to deter them from evil. But they should be reminded that they may not come off in the future world so well as they expect. There will be suffering as well as extinction, and suffering proportioned to guilt and responsibility."

Mr M.—"Then you maintain that destruction is preceded by positive infliction?"

Fred.—"Yes; I think Scripture is clear on that point. I judge, indeed, especially from the Epistle to the Romans, that there was a time, the period from

Adam to Moses, before the giving of the law, when the impenitent simply perished without the infliction of suffering; for so I understand the declaration in the fifth chapter, that sin was not then imputed. And this rule, doubtless, still applies to the case of infants, whom I quite agree with Mr White in thinking, to have been signified by those 'that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.' But I think it also appears from other Scriptures, especially the second of the Romans, where it is said, 'tribulation and anguish are upon every soul of man that doeth evil'—that sin is now visited upon all unconverted adults with positive infliction. On this subject I do not wish to speak dogmatically. I believe it requires, and will repay, much further elucidation from Scripture; but that there is such a thing as positive infliction in the future life, admits, I think, of no rational dispute. The suffering is, indeed, in the case of those who suffer, the instrument of their destruction, as is shewn by the image of fire, which is of a consuming nature."

"Let us now turn to the passage you spoke of, which occurs in Mark ix., 43-49. This, which occurs here three times, but which, in the Greek MS. of best authority, the Vatican, is found but once—'Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched'—I understand thus, where their decay doth not cease, nor the torment intermit till they be consumed."

Mrs M.—"Ah! but that last is an addition of your own. Scripture leaves it unconditional; the one shall not die, the other shall not be quenched."

Fred.—"I think this will result from the term salt in the next verse; but, independent of that, the condition is one which the very nature of the case demands. If

the worm prey on the body, it must waste away, unless it be miraculously preserved—a supposition we have no right to make. If the fire burns a substance, it must at last be consumed. I have always thought it an important principle in interpreting Scripture, as it is in understanding human literature, not to force out of the images employed all the ideas which the images themselves might embody, but only to draw from them such as evidently directed the writer in selecting them. Now, here it seems clear to me that when it is said, ‘their worm dieth not,’ all that it is necessary to suppose is, that, so far as they are concerned, so long as it preys upon them, it dieth not. (This, indeed, may perhaps be still further shewn by the use of the possessive pronoun *their*). And so with the fire. Indeed, the fire cannot be said in any case to be *quenched* which consumes all its material. Its going out of itself after that is not being quenched. The idea of a miraculous preservation in consumption is a perfectly gratuitous one. We know very well there is such a thing as suffering that does not waste away its subject; and it was quite a supposable case in itself, that the wicked should be continued in endless existence, and that existence one of torment. But in this case, why were not more appropriate images employed, such as should indicate pain simply, and not consumption?”

Elizabeth.—“I think, too, you should point out those passages in the Old Testament in which fires are spoken of as not being quenched, and never going out, which have long ceased burning.”

Fred.—“Yes, that is very important. Winchester speaks so well on that point, I think we should quote from him. I will go and fetch the book.”

Frederic left the room, and soon returned with a copy of that highly valuable work, entitled "The Universal Restoration," by Elhanan Winchester, from which he read the following passage, making slight omissions in some places:—

"We read in several places of Scripture of fires that have ceased ages ago, that were spoken of in as strong terms as are used by Christ respecting the fire of hell. As, for instance, in Lev. vi. 13, we read, 'The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall *never* go out.' This is a much stronger expression than if it had been said, 'It shall not be quenched;' for it is said, '*It shall never go out;*' but surely it must be used with some limitation; for we know that it hath ceased ages ago; and we read that Daniel prophesied of the Messiah, that he should 'cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease' (Dan. ix. 27); but it would certainly have been a weak argument against Daniel's prophecy, that, as Moses had said the fire shall never go out upon the altar, therefore the Messiah could never cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease; but it would be just as good an argument against Daniel's prophecy as the words of Christ are against Isaiah's;—'For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.' 'I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear, surely shall say, In Jehovah have I righteousness and strength; to him shall come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.' (Isa., lvii. 16; xlv. 23, 24).

"In Jer. xvii. 27, we read, 'But if you will not

hearken unto me,' &c., 'then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and *it shall not be quenched.*' See also chap. iv. 4; xxi. 12; Amos, v. 6; 2 Kings, xxii. 17.

"Similar threatenings we find positively pronounced by Ezekiel at the command of God: . . . 'Moreover the word of Jehovah came unto me saying, Son of man, set thy face toward the south. . . . Behold I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree; the flaming flame shall not be quenched; and all faces from the south to the north shall be burnt therein; and all flesh shall see that I, Jehovah, have kindled it; *it shall not be quenched*' (Ezek. xx. 45-48; see also Jer. vii. 20)."

"Now these threatenings were surely executed; for the people did not hearken unto God; He did certainly kindle a fire, and it burned, and was not quenched, but consumed Jerusalem and all her palaces; and the beautiful forests that were so much esteemed shared the same fate. But what person will argue that the whole city and country must be now in flames, and must have been consuming from the days of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, because of these expressions, 'The flaming flame shall not be quenched,' &c., since we know that Jerusalem and the country round about have been since inhabited, and will be again in a more glorious manner than ever?"

"Neither will it help the matter to say, that we must understand the fire *figuratively*, for the anger of God, &c., for he declares by Zechariah, after the seventy years' captivity, that He was 'returned to Jerusalem *with mercies.*'—See Zech. i. 16. And though the present desolation of the land is compared to the overthrow of

Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim.—(Deut. xxix. 23–28); and Ezekiel not only speaks of it as desolate and waste, but as having been always so [‘According to our translation, of course,’ interposed Frederic], though we know it was formerly filled with inhabitants (see Ezek. xxxvi. 34, 35; xxxviii. 8), yet all the prophets speak of a time to come when it shall be much more flourishing than ever it hath been; and Isaiah says, ‘Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee; I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations’ (Isa. ix. 15).

“Thus we may see by these and many other passages, that predictions apparently directly contrary one to the other, may be all fulfilled upon the same land, people, and persons, only allowing a proper time to each, without which we can never make sense of many prophecies.

“Isaiah, speaking of the land of Bozrah, says, ‘And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone; and the land thereof shall become burning pitch; it shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever; from generation to generation it shall be waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever. But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it.’ . . . (Birds that cannot live in fire, pitch, and brimstone any better than men). ‘The wild beasts,’ &c.—(Isa. xxxiv. 9–17).

“Now, in this passage there are such things spoken of as are impossible to be fulfilled at once, without as great a miracle as was wrought for the three children in the furnace, and which there is no reason to expect will

be wrought in favour of cormorants, bitterns, owls, &c. In the 10th verse we read of a period, called *for ever*, wherein this land is to be on fire, and is not to be quenched night nor day; and the smoke of it is to ascend *for ever*; but in the 17th verse it is said, that the before-mentioned birds and beasts shall possess it *for ever*, even from generation to generation shall they dwell therein. But one of these periods must end before the other can begin; the fire must cease to burn, and the smoke to ascend, before beasts can take up their constant dwelling there, and birds can lay and hatch, and gather their young ones under their shadow, and enjoy the society of their mates. And thus the whole prophecy may be fulfilled, not in the *same*, but in *different* periods; and thus also may all the threatenings and all the promises in the Sacred Books be accomplished, not at once, but each in their season."

"You certainly have more to say for your view than I imagined," said Mr Merton. "But I must confess I am reluctant to give up immortality as an inalienable attribute of humanity. There has always appeared something grand to me in the idea that that breath of God which was once infused into man's being, could never be recalled."

Fred.—"There is something grand in the idea, no doubt; but this sublime attribute may not belong to man as such, but to man in Christ—Christ who 'brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.'"

Mr M.—"But is not immortality a necessary quality of mind—of that immaterial principle within, losing which it seems to lose all its nobility, and to be little raised above inanimate matter."

Fred.—"I cannot say that I feel it so. The superiority

of mind over matter seems to me to consist in its inherent qualities—something which it has in actual possession, and not only in reversion. Immortality cannot be an inherent quality in any derived being. There is, indeed, a notion which long prevailed, and is not yet quite exploded, that of the inherent indestructibility of the soul ; but such a figment is worthy only of the most arrant superstition. That a thing which has begun may not also cease to exist, is contrary to all philosophy. It is an ancient axiom that no cause can act *when* and *where* it is not, therefore, present derived existence cannot be caused by past existence, which being past, though but a moment, is as truly non-existent as if it had never been. Present existence must, therefore, depend immediately and solely on that same cause which originated past existence, the will of the Creator. Immortality, as I said before, is no inherent attribute of any creature. Nothing is needed, but that God should withdraw His sustaining, or as we should more correctly say, His creating hand, and we must fall back into our original nothing."

Elizabeth.—"I was struck with your remark the other day, that the opposite opinion, though such a thing is not suspected by those who hold it, contains a principle which is akin to atheism."

Fred.—"Yes. Dr Williams of Rotherham, who edits the English edition of President Edwards' works, observes very rightly that on that contrary hypothesis, 'the world would continue in being, though there were no God to uphold it.'"

"Now I do not charge you, my dear Merton, with holding this extreme view, but I think it is well for us to have a clear sense of the absurdity and latent im-

piety of the notion, that we may entirely uproot it from our convictions, embracing in its stead that simple truth that the continued existence of the soul, as of the body, depends solely on the sovereign will of God. It is thus, and thus alone, that we shall find ourselves fit to listen with simplicity and candour to what revelation teaches in the matter."

Mrs M.—"Before you enter on the examination of that point, let me just remark that there surely is in the heart of man an *instinct* of immortality."

Fred.—"Do you think that that amounts to anything more than an instinctive desire for it, and a natural shrinking from the thought of annihilation?"

Mrs M.—"You allow, then, that he has that."

Fred.—"Certainly, otherwise it would be no punishment to him. But I do not think that should be any argument with you, at any rate, for the expectation of immortality. We all know that man has an instinctive desire for happiness; but you believe the majority will not be happy in the next life. Indeed, to be consistent [smiling] you ought to maintain that the desire of the wicked for immortality is an argument in favour of his not obtaining it."

Elizabeth.—"It must be natural for any mind given to reflection, seeing how fragmentary a thing this world is, how many enigmas remain unsolved, how good is oppressed and evil triumphant, to look for another state, for fuller insight and more perfect retribution. But that state need not be eternal."

Fred.—"No. That is an error which Eternists are apt to fall into, confounding the general question of immortality with that of future retribution. Dr Hamilton, while acknowledging them as distinct, terms them 'very

proximate if not indissoluble truths.' It is manifest, however, that some of the strongest arguments for the one, bring no support to the other. But it is possible that some feeling of the necessity of a future judgment may induce that instinctive expectation you spoke of [turning to Mrs Merton]. I could not pretend to determine that point."

Mr M.—"I think we should proceed to the Scriptural investigation."

Fred.—"Well, I would begin by asking, Has any one imagined even he has found any intimation or hint in Scripture that it is part of the inalienable nature of man as such, to continue for ever in being? A remarkable silence this, considering how important and interesting to man would have been the information, and how directly bearing on the interests of his soul. It would be rash, I acknowledge, to consider the negative evidence as decisive, but at least it leaves our minds free to understand, in its natural and unconstrained sense, whatever *positive* testimony we may find.

"We all know what are the terms employed to describe the lot of the impenitent in the Old Testament—to *perish*, *consume*, *be destroyed*, &c. These are the words which occur in our present translation, and no one, I believe, be he Eternist, Universalist, or Destructionist, has complained of mistranslation. It appears to me, therefore, that all that we have to do is to take up the clear untwisted meaning of the English words, and that will give us the unequivocal sense of Scripture on the point. In preparation for this evening, [rising and fetching some books from a side-table,] I have taken from your shelves two dictionaries, Johnson's and Webster's. Let us see what they tell us about these words."

He turned up these words in Johnson, and pointed out how he gives first the literal meaning, and then adds, "in theology," &c. Thus, "*Perish* : 1, to die, come to nothing ; 2, be in a perpetual state of decay ; 3, [in theology] lost eternally."

He then turned to Webster, and pointed out how, after giving the etymology of *perish* *per-eo*, literally to depart wholly, he gives seven meanings implying decay and coming to nothing, and then three theological senses.

Fred.—"Here is *consume*—to waste away slowly, to be exhausted, and no other meaning. To *destroy*—to demolish, separate the parts of an edifice, *the union of which is necessary to constitute the thing*. Ruin—annihilation. The theological sense of inflicting suffering, you see, he does not give.

"Let us now consider the word *death*."

Mr M.—"Ah, yes! There is a good deal to be said about that word. You will certainly acknowledge that the first instinctive impression, with respect to the death of the body, that it is a cessation of existence, is proved to be an erroneous one, and why should it not be the same with the death of the soul? Indeed, the argument from analogy drawn from the indestructibility of matter, seems to me to lead us further. It must be acknowledged to be extremely unlikely, I should almost say incredible, that while that inferior substance suffers, as we know it does, no diminution in amount, notwithstanding the many changes in its mode of existence, any of that nobler creation of spirit should positively perish."

Fred.—"I can see that the argument has its force. But I should say of argument from analogy generally, that while highly useful in the discovery of truth in the way of suggestion, it is not its office to confirm and seal truth

in our minds as logical reasoning does. Certain analogies may be so marked and clear as to teach us with certainty some general principles which we may afterwards with confidence apply. For instance, the structure of the world and laws of nature exhibit unmistakably to us the wisdom and love of God, and we need not hesitate to ascribe to Him these same attributes, in the more hidden operations of His hands. But if we were to infer from what we witness in the kingdom of nature that the Creator never has recourse to destruction in any of His other works, it would be pushing analogy too far. There seems to be *some* doubt, indeed, whether in certain chemical changes, there be not a very minute loss of quantity. But, passing this by, as God does not apparently now, in the same sense as he did in the beginning, create *new* matter, but rather makes use of the old materials, it is plainly necessary that these materials should not to any notable extent diminish in amount. For aught we know, however, these circling changes may at last come to an end, and as God at first created the world out of nothing, so may He, when its destined course is run, suffer it to fall into nothing again. It is otherwise with spirit. You do not think that the infant's *soul* is formed from substance already existing as his body is. There is in this case a perfectly new creation. And if the analogy fails in the *origin*, so may it in the end of the soul. The argument from analogy requires, perhaps, to be still more cautiously applied in the interpretation of images in languages. To plead, for this purpose, certain extraneous facts connected with the death of the body, namely, the continued existence of the soul after its disembodiment, and the perpetuation, under other forms, of the dead matter of which the body was formed,

appears to me most unphilosophical. In order to judge what are the various extensions and filiations of meaning a word is likely to undergo, it is clearly not necessary to take into account all that a fully informed mind knows about the original subject of it; for this knowledge will always be more *comprehensive*—embrace more particulars than are alluded to in the first application of the word, or are usually present to the minds of those who employ it. We must rather, as I think you will agree, seek to discover what is the common aspect which the thing bears to all minds, and what is therefore the *distinctive idea* which the term denoting it embodies and conveys. Now, what is that idea in this case?"

Elizabeth.—"People must have had in all nations and languages a term for an event so familiar and yet so striking and solemn as death, and a distinctive idea connected with it, long before they had any conception generally of those other two great truths."

Mr M.—"Yes, and even now there are some who deny, or who are ignorant of them, and yet it cannot be said that they differ from us in the sense in which they use the word *death* as applied to the body. What do you conceive then, Somers, the distinctive idea connected with death to be?"

Fred.—"Decidedly, I should say, that of termination."

Mr M.—"Termination of what, in reference to natural death?"

Fred.—"Not of the body, as you rightly say, nor of the soul, but of the *union* of body and soul; or rather, of the mysterious yet palpable *life* which resulted from it. Natural *death* is the termination of natural *life*."

Mr M.—"I think you will find it difficult to make

that out in reference to all the meanings of the word in Scripture—for instance, spiritual death. We are all born in this state, which is sometimes succeeded by spiritual life, so that in this case death is not the end but the beginning."

Fred.—"Yes, there is certainly some departure from the original idea here. But the transition in meaning from the loss of a thing to its absence, is not difficult. We in English speak of dead marble as well as of a dead tree, though the marble never had life. The thing absent in spiritual death is love, which being an active, animating principle, is fitly represented under the emblem of life. This I judge to be the death which Adam suffered on the very day when he ate the forbidden fruit. Having committed that deliberate sin, he lost the Divine principle of love, and became spiritually dead."

Mr M.—"I have heard the objection made to your view of the primitive death of the soul, that it does not form a proper contrast to the life which is the reward of the righteous. As that is not existence merely, but a happy existence, so must we suppose the death which is threatened to the wicked to be not non-existence merely, but an existence in misery."

Fred. (smiling)—"You need scarcely have told me that you had *heard* that objection. I am sure it could not have originated in your own honest mind. The objection itself needs, I think, to be interpreted. If I understand it right, it may be refuted *ex absurdo*, as proving too much. It would come to this, that it is impossible for a negation, such as non-existence, to form a contrast with any positive actuality; for all actuality supposes, not existence merely, but a certain *suchness* (in this case it is happiness) combined with existence."

Mr M.—"Perhaps, however, the objection might be somewhat differently interpreted; or rather, the statement might be a little altered. As the fact of eternal existence would be of little value to the righteous, but only the happiness of that existence, so when life is promised them, the word must be used in a sense of which I believe there is no doubt it is susceptible—that of happiness; the corresponding word, *death*, should in propriety be taken to designate the opposite of happiness—misery. As another sanction for this use of the word *death*, I would remind you of the principle which obtains so much in the birth of new meanings—*ex adjuncto*. As the death of the body is so generally preceded by suffering, it is by no means unnatural that the term *death* should come to mean suffering."

Fred.—"That last is the best argument you have brought forward yet. As for the other, it too may, I think, be reduced to absurdity. For just as little as we can insulate bare existence, and require *it* to have formed the contrast to non-existence, can we insulate a certain suchness, such as happiness, independent of existence, and suppose it to form the sole reward of the righteous, and *its* opposite therefore, misery, the sole punishment of the others. Existence is a substratum with qualities inhering in it; and just as the substratum cannot subsist without inhering qualities, so neither can these qualities subsist without the substratum in which to inhere. If, therefore, the life promised the righteous include happiness, it must include existence too, and be thus analysed—existence *plus* happiness. Now, it is clear that we may either take this entity and contrast it with another entity, consisting of existence *plus* misery, or, if we must have a strict contrast, it will be a certain something

which is *minus* happiness and *minus* existence = non-existence."

Elizabeth.—"It has often appeared to me as if there was a delicate beauty in the reward of the righteous being rather described as eternal life than as eternal bliss. That the life should be eternal, we might not have ventured to predict; but *if* the life was to be eternal, there seemed scarcely any necessity, considering the character of God, to assure us that the happiness should be so too."

Mr M.—"It certainly is what we should naturally have expected; and I must own, there is a *simplicity* in that sense of the term *life* which recommends itself to my mind. You acknowledge, however, Frederic, that the principle *ex adjuncto* is one to be taken into account."

Fred.—"Yes, I do; indeed, I so feel its force that, had I no other means of knowing what was to form the lot of the impenitent in the future world, I could by no means feel certain from the simple use of the term *death* that it was not precisely what Eternists believe. In like manner with the term *life*—it admits, I am aware, of the interpretation you would put upon it. And thus, while I certainly should be surprised that the sacred writers should, not once or twice, but habitually, designate the peculiar privilege of the righteous by a term whose radical meaning simply implied continuance in being, if it was the inalienable property of man to continue for ever to exist; and, on the other hand, that they should employ to describe an interminable existence in misery a word whose proper idea is termination—I know not that I could scout the idea as *impossible*."

Elizabeth.—"That would by no means have satisfied Dr Hamilton. You have not read his work 'On Future

Rewards and Punishments,' Mr Merton? He seems to indicate there that Destructionists had no *right* to use the words *death* and *life* in their sense of the cessation and continuance of mere existence, as if *this* was the forced and unnatural one!"

Mr M.—"That is certainly going a great length."

Mrs M.—"Can you mention any passage of Scripture where these words are allowed by all to be used in that sense?"

Elizabeth.—"As to the word *life*, or at least the word *to live*, Frederic pointed out to me the other day that expression which occurs so often in the Old Testament, 'As the Lord liveth.' The meaning there must be one of simple existence. In one place too, it is said, 'As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth,' where evidently the speaker swears by the *existence* of God and that of the soul of his hearer."

Fred.—"There is another remarkable passage where the idea of death is also included. It is where Christ, in replying to the Sadducees, who it is well known maintained the non-existence of the soul after death, makes use of these words, 'God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.' There is no reference here to happiness or misery, simply to continuance and cessation of being. Dr Hamilton speaks of the Destructionists' 'quiet use of the word *death*,' but our Lord uses the word very 'quietly' here in the same sense.

"But though I allowed it to be in itself supposable that the single terms *life* and *death* should be used in the deflected sense for which Eternists contend, I think it is really asking too much to expect us to do the same with one and all of those other terms, *perish*, *consume*, *destroy*, &c. In fact, the difficulty of your view is

so much increased, I do not see how you can get over it."

Mr M.—"I have been struck certainly how many expressions there are in the Old Testament which imply the *transitoriness* of the wicked. These seem rather to bear out your view."

Elizabeth.—"I looked out this morning a paper which was drawn up by a dear friend of my husband's, who was a Destructionist, the first indeed to introduce to him that view. Frederic thought it would be well if I read out some of it to-night, if agreeable to you."

Both Mr and Mrs Merton cordially agreeing, Elizabeth produced the paper, and after observing that it opened with the very remark Mr Merton last made, began to read as follows:—

"No one can, I think, read the Scriptures with any degree of thoughtful attention, and not be struck with the frequent descriptions and allusions to the *transitoriness* of the unconverted man's existence. 'Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth' (Ps. xc. 5, 6). It is true that (1.) in many places we must understand the reference to be to the short span of the natural life of all men alike. The Psalmist exclaims, 'Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best estate is altogether vanity.' There is also (2.) a numerous class of texts that speak of the wicked perishing, being destroyed, and consumed, which we must interpret as referring to a prophetic period clearly foretold, when the enemies of the Church shall be cut off from the *earth*, and the righteous shall inherit it. Thus (Ps.

xxxvii. 9), 'For evil-doers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.' It does not follow, however, because here and in similar places the main idea be the destruction of the power and of the natural life of the wicked, which frees the saints from their oppression, the fact of the *extinction* of the souls of the persecutors is not also in many cases conveyed or implied. Thus when we read further on, 'The wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away;' the language scarcely seems appropriate as applied to that natural death which sooner or later the godly also will undergo.

"However this be, there are other texts which manifestly admit not of either of the above explanations:—

"1. When life is not only described as fleeting, but as leading to a state of unconsciousness or forgetfulness, the latter of which in Scripture phrase is sometimes equivalent to cessation: 'Let my right hand forget her cunning.'* Psalm vi. is evidently the earnest pleading of a spirit which fears it is one on whom the anger of God rests. The supplicant implores the Lord to 'return and deliver his soul'—from what? From that death which he describes thus—'In death there is no remembrance of thee; in the grave who shall give thee thanks?' He fears *extinction*. A soul in a similar condition in Psalm xiii. exclaims—'Consider and hear me, O Lord my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death.'

* We have this idiom in common English—*e.g.*, His eyes forget to weep.

Some may possibly say, 'Under the Jewish dispensation there seems to have hung so much obscurity over the fate of the soul after death, that the Psalmist may have been only representing the opinions of his time when he spoke of it as extinction.' Granting even the fact here maintained (which I believe might be clearly disproved) respecting the then current belief, the hypothesis built upon it, implying as it does such serious error on the part of the sacred writer, would indicate in those who made it so loose a conception of the inspiration of Scripture, that I could not with any satisfaction discuss the matter with them as one of Scripture argument—on this account, that we could not meet on any common ground. Others still might say, 'There is no error conveyed here, but the Psalmist is describing *natural* death only, and that as it appears to man; viewing it not in a false but a finite point of view—a course often adopted in Scripture.' The strongly deprecatory language at the beginning, however, and still more the triumphant tone at the close of each Psalm (when the speaker has evidently regained the assurance of safety), seem scarcely to consist with good taste and propriety, if we apply them to release from the fear of impending bodily dissolution—an evil small in itself to the child of God, and which, such as it was, could only be deferred for a short period.

"2. There is a long list of texts in which destruction is clearly spoken of as awaiting the *souls* of the ungodly. Thus (Ps. cxlv. 20), 'The Lord preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.' The *preservation* here cannot be that of natural life; so neither can the destruction be. The word here put in contrast with destruction may guide us (if we stand in need of any such direction) to the real meaning of the

latter. 'Preservation' forms no antithesis to eternal suffering, but it does to extinction of being."

Elizabeth, putting down the paper at this point, said, turning to her husband, "There is one difficulty which has just struck me. How is it, if the natural man at any rate was to cease to exist after a certain time, that he is described as *destroyed*? When we speak of a thing being destroyed, we seem to *imply* at least that it would have continued to exist but for our interference."

Fred.—"That is an interesting question. I do not think it ever occurred to me before. In the first place, you must remember that while the natural man, as an individual, never had immortality, yet that he may be said to be deprived of it, because Adam, the representative of the race, forfeited it for himself and his posterity at the fall. That simple death, therefore, which reigned from Adam to Moses, which, as I said before, I believe to have been the painless dropping out of being, was in a certain sense a punishment; though in another sense, as I understand it, sin, personal sin, was said not to have been imputed when there was no infliction of a positive nature. Now, when the term *destruction* is used, I judge that the reference is, *first*, to the putting an end to an existence which, *unforfeited*, would have been continued; and *secondly*, to this being brought about in a painful manner, as by fire."

After a little more conversation on this head, chiefly in connexion with the Rev. Mr White's work, of which Frederic spoke in high terms, though not agreeing with it on all points, Elizabeth went on with the paper:—

"Then, if we proceed to the New Testament, our

Lord describes the way of sinners as 'the way that leadeth to destruction' (Matt. vii. 13). St Paul speaks with sorrow of 'certain enemies of the cross of Christ whose end is destruction.' In 2 Peter ii., certain false teachers are said to 'bring upon themselves swift destruction;' and further on there is a threat against other wicked characters that they shall 'utterly perish.' The texts are very numerous in which the doom of the wicked is declared to be 'to perish.'

"The same is doubtless true of the terms *consume* and *consumption*; but in these it is more difficult to distinguish with *certainly* threats directed against the bodily life and that of the soul. One expression, however, is so fearfully unambiguous, it supersedes the necessity of finding any other—'Our God is a consuming fire.' With the terms denoting *corruption*, there may also be some ambiguity; but it may at least be allowed that when applied to the future fate of the soul, it would be no inapt figure to convey the idea of wasting away under the wrath of God (Gal. vi. 8). *Perdition* is another term by which the doom of the wicked is described. Judas is termed the 'son of perdition.' The day of judgment is also described as 'the day of perdition to ungodly men' (2 Peter iii. 9). We read (Rom. ix. 22) of 'vessels of wrath fitted to destruction'—where, if there *is* any ambiguity in this last word, taken in itself, the figure employed entirely removes it. No one will, I suppose, imagine that these vessels are destroyed by being preserved. They are dashed in pieces—a common figure used in the East to this day to denote destruction, which comes out more expressly in the Old Testament: Ps. ii. 9, 'Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel;' and Rev. ii. 27, 'As

the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers.'

"It is remarkable indeed, and, to say the least, very *difficult* to reconcile with the Eternist or Correctionist theories, how all the figures and images employed in Scripture to describe the after fate of the wicked, convey the idea of cessation rather than continuance. These are to be burnt up like chaff (Luke iii. 17), or tares (Matt. xiii. 40); hewn down and cast into the fire like a tree (Luke iii. 9), or a withered branch (John xv. 6); ground to powder (Matt. xxi. 44); delivered to tormentors till the debt is discharged (Matt. xviii. 34); and cast into prison till the uttermost farthing is paid (Matt. v. 26).

"These last images very markedly teach a limited period of suffering. The comparison of the *many* and *few* stripes (not *severer* and less *severe*) appears also to indicate a difference in the duration of the punishment assigned to different offenders, not in the intensity of the suffering. On this argument, however, I lay no stress. There are other images which, less unequivocally than the first named, convey the idea of destruction—such as the house being thrown down by a flood (Luke vi. 48); the casting away the bad fish (Matt. xiii. 48). The expression we have before alluded to of 'losing the life' (Matt. x. 38)—incorrectly rendered in other places, losing the soul—is also strongly corroborative of the extinction of the soul.

"If then Eternists and Correctionists hold that a creature, described as in the next scene being devoted to corruption and perdition, dying, perishing, being killed, consumed, destroyed, hewn down, ground to powder, and burnt up, does not cease to exist, but, on the con-

trary, maintains its continuity of being to eternity, we must seek for the tenacity of such a strange belief elsewhere than in the paucity or the ambiguity of Scripture evidence in favour of destruction."

Elizabeth had scarcely finished the paper when the servants entered with the supper-tray, after which were family prayers. At supper Mr Merton said, "I must confess, Frederic, that I find you have very much more to say for your view than I had any idea of. I am not prepared yet to declare myself a convert. I must also say, generally, that it is often easier to attack than to defend a long-established opinion, even though it be a true one. We are so accustomed to take its truth for granted, that we are apt to leave unexamined the grounds on which it rests, and therefore are not likely to do it justice when called on to defend it. This has been my case in the present instance. You, on the other hand, in addition to your acknowledged superior talents, possess the advantage of having for some time past thought a great deal on the subject, and viewed it on all sides. Perhaps you are right. I really feel perhaps you may be so."

"It is not at all necessary," replied Frederic, "that you should make up your mind hastily on the subject. At the same time, I should be very sorry if you let it drop, or even remained satisfied with uncertainty. I hope you will think vigorously and continuously on the matter till all appears plain before you. And always refer to me, wherever I am, when you feel inclined to do so, with any new objection that may arise."

Mrs M.—"What William said of an old-established opinion, reminded me that we had paid no attention to what is surely a very important consideration, that

eternal punishment has been from the earliest ages to the present time the prevalent, I suppose almost universal, belief of the Christian Church."

Elizabeth.—"Perhaps we might discuss that point to-morrow."

Frederic.—"Very well."

Elizabeth.—"At any rate we have followed the right order, in first seeking to discover what the Word of God says on the subject, and then turning to the commentary given by man."

CHAPTER III.

ARGUMENT FROM AUTHORITY—NON-ETERNISM IN THE
CHURCH—FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF FREDERIC
AND ELIZABETH'S VIEWS.

MRS MERTON resumed the conversation on the following day by saying, "Now, Mr Somers, you are to tell us how it has happened that the doctrine you condemn has been the constant belief of Christians of all ages, all countries, all persuasions, all churches. I do not say anything personal—indeed, I think you are better able to think for yourself than most men; but I must say, there seems to me to be something presumptuous in any man's setting up his own opinion against that of the rest of the world."

"That is what great *discoverers* generally have to do," said Frederic, with a smile. "However, I cannot claim the honour of discovery in this matter; neither, therefore, can I incur the charge of singularity. In a small minority, perhaps, I am; but you do not think the majority is always in the right?"

"Certainly not," replied Mrs Merton.

Mr M.—"In this case the majority is certainly immense—one would almost say, overwhelming."

Fred.—"It will not be overwhelming to one that duly considers how gregarious men are in most of their beliefs."

Mr M.—"The ordinary run of men; but there are in every age, in every church, men also that are born to be leaders."

Fred.—"That is true; yet it is impossible to trace the development of truth in any one department and not to perceive—and the fact should by no means cause us unmitigated regret, for it proceeds from only the partial abuse of a most necessary provision in our nature—that the beliefs of the novelty-loving innovator, as well as of the change-dreading conservator, are, for the most part, subject to traditional and atmospheric influences. Opinion is mostly built on opinion, and, so far as it is so, it has no independent strength."

Mr M.—"But if the original opinion had no strength in it—if it did not rest firmly on its foundation, how can we account for the high superstructure of subsequent belief?"

Fred.—"We must consider afterwards the inherent value of the original opinion, and perhaps we may in a measure account for its wide prevalence independently of its truth. But, in the meantime, I think it is of immense importance to turn our attention to the general question of the value of opinion, and for this purpose especially to distinguish between that which is the direct result of personal conviction, and that which is simply adopted from others. The strictly independent, candid, and competent judgment of one individual may, in real value, outweigh the coinciding, but borrowed opinion of thousands. I do not think I am at all disposed to disparage the direct testimony of others. For instance, though I was originally strongly disinclined to believe in the facts of *clairvoyance*, and have never had the slightest personal experience of them, I now firmly be-

lieve in *clairvoyance* as a general fact, while I have no doubt, in special instances, there is much false coin mixed up with the true."

Mrs M.—"I cannot imagine how you can believe a thing so incredible."

Fred.—"Well, I really think the French proverb is applicable here—*Incrédules les plus crédules*. To attempt to account for such facts, or even for their wide-spread belief, on principles before known, requires one to *believe*—*i. e.*, to tax the laws of probability—far more, it seems to me, than to admit of a new set of phenomena altogether."

Mr M.—"You surely would admit that numbers afforded confirmation in a case like this."

Fred.—"Yes, certainly ; because this is a case of simple evidence. Each witness forms a unit. But in a case of opinion numbers are often deceptive. To estimate them rightly, *strictly* borrowed opinions should be set down as cyphers under their original, and then, however long and formidable-looking the column before us, when we come to reckon up the amount of genuine testimony, we shall find it is that of the unit at the top."

Mr M.—"I do not see that such a calculation is practically possible."

Fred.—"No, it certainly is not—happily it is not. Still the principle should be borne in mind when we are tempted to prejudge new or rare opinions."

Mr M.—"Certainly, so far I think we must concede."

Mrs M.—"I am no Romanist any more than you, Mr Somers, but while I would not regard the opinion of the Church as an *authority*, it surely may often be found useful as an *index* to truth. Dear me ! what would become of us if we required to hold every one of our

opinions in abeyance till we had thoroughly tested it for ourselves?"

Fred. (smiling)—"Of course we cannot do that; but, at the same time, when we do not, our belief, however correct it may *happen* to be, and however sufficient for ourselves, does not deserve to have any weight with others. I refer now to that species of belief which is in its nature founded on evidence, and whose value depends on that of the data on which it rests. There is another kind of belief totally distinct from this, and independent of reasoning; its value cannot thus be impugned."

Mrs M.—"I was going to make the remark, that according to your principles, the belief, the simple, child-like faith of the unlettered peasant, who certainly has little skill in weighing evidence, would have no worth; whereas we know that God Himself so highly esteems it, that He has attached to it the gift of eternal life."

Fred.—"You have opened a most important question. You cannot think that God honours any belief because it is ignorant and narrow—such a belief, for instance, as I will describe to you. A certain man has exercised his mind little enough on the subject of religion, but he has always attended a gospel ministry, he understands the scheme, and not only fancies he believes, but really does believe it with his understanding. But if you ask him why he believes it, he tells you, and tells you truly, it is because his minister says it is the truth, and he knows he is a clever man, and should know pretty well what is the meaning of the Bible. 'But,' he is told, 'other people understand the Bible differently.' 'Let them do so, if they like,' he replies; 'I am satisfied to follow my own minister.' Now this is a fair specimen of what many call a simple, unquestioning faith. And so in a sense it

is ; but it is only unquestioning by means of its weakness and limitation, and it is often all built upon the word of man. But there is another kind of belief which God does honour, for it is His special gift. It *may* be as little able as the other to *reason out* its conclusions, for in fact they were not built upon reasoning. This belief is ultimate ; it is a kind of sight. The man who possesses it will not say he believes so and so because such another man affirms it, any more than the child believes that the rose is beautiful, because his mother told him so. He *feels*, and therefore he believes. He believes the gospel, because he experiences it to be the power of God unto his present salvation—salvation from sin unto holiness. But this belief too, though it necessarily carries its own sanction with it, and *must* be satisfactory to its possessor, is not fitted to reproduce itself, or to have the force of an argument with others. That belief which is founded on reasoning on the other hand (and no one pretends, I think, to support the doctrine of Eternism by any other) derives all its force from the intrinsic cogency of that reasoning, and the trustworthiness of the data on which it rests.”

Mrs M.—“ Well, that is an interesting view. But I have thought of another argument. Natural philosophers talk, I think, of the grouping of phenomena and facts. They speak of the recurrence of facts in groups as a great aid, not only to observation, but to the discovery of subordinate laws. Now, I think, you must allow that the doctrine of eternal punishment is generally found in very good company ; and the fact of its going along with doctrines which you as well as we receive as undoubted truth—the doctrines of grace, for instance—should form a

presumption in its favour. It is likely there is a common law uniting them."

Fred.—"I think the principle you mention may be of some use even in theology in the way of test, though not of evidence; but here it appears to me very inapplicable. The tenet we are speaking of is often found in the best company, it is true; but we may find it quite as widely and as closely associated with what is doubtful, if not bad, entering as it did into Paganism, Phariseeism, and Mohammedanism. My theory, but I only give it as a theory, is this:—It was adopted, along with many other errors by the Pharisees from Pagan sources, thence by means of Judaizing teachers, of whom we know there were many in the early times, it spread to the Christian Church, was adopted by the Church of Rome, and remained an error unextirpated by the Reformation. At the same time, while it has been the current belief of Christendom during most ages, there have ever been here and there dissentients from the doctrine. The argument from authority has so little weight with me personally, and I have so little taste for antiquarian lore, that I could not pretend myself to be able to satisfy one who was curious on the subject."

Elizabeth.—"You know we examined together Dr Hamilton's supposed eternist testimony from the early fathers in his work on future rewards and punishments, and we thought that, while there was some unequivocally on his side, there was another portion which, resting simply on the word *aionios*, admitted of the same variety of interpretation as Scripture itself."

Fred.—"And, if you remember, I brought forward proofs of the Latin words, *aeternus* and *sempiternus* being

used in the meaning of life-long. Thus, some writer speaks of Catiline's associates at Rome being cast by Cicero into *vincula æterna*—life-long imprisonment; and Cicero, in his fourth speech against Catiline, speaks of him as destined to *sempiterna vincula*."

Elizabeth.—"And Mr White's quotation from Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, in his dedication, shews that he at least ought not to have been numbered with Eternists. He speaks of the righteous as 'receiving length of days for ever and ever,' 'while the unthankful,' he says, 'deprives himself of the gift of duration to all eternity.'"

Fred. (turning up Note S. in Dr Hamilton's book).—"Dr Hamilton, under the head Justin Martyn, says:—"Bishop Taylor quotes a passage which says, "They who are designed to punishment shall abide so long as God please to have them to live and to be punished." After giving the Greek, he adds, 'That language might imply, though not necessarily, that such punishment admitted of possible termination.' Most people would find it difficult, I think, to assign to it any other meaning. Dr Hamilton says, 'These words were not spoken by Justin,' but 'by his venerable instructor in Christianity.' I believe there is other proof that Justin Martyn was not an Eternist."

Elizabeth.—"Mr White says that Dodwell, a learned writer in the last century, brought forward an important mass of evidence, to prove that the primitive Church did not hold the immortality of the unregenerate. The opinion seems to be gaining ground that the early Church generally looked on annihilation as the doom of the impenitent."

Fred. (still looking at Dr Hamilton's notes).—"Tertullian and Cyprian, however, seem clear for endless

misery. But there must have been an important enough class of non-Eternists in the days of Jerome and Augustine, as Dr Hamilton mentions the former (A.D. 392), 'summing up the passages of Scripture commonly adduced in his day, just the same as in ours, towards the support of the final deliverance of the wicked, evidently with strong disapproval,' while Augustine devoted a considerable portion of his work, *Civitas Dei*, to the refutation of such views. I have copied out here a quotation from Chevalier Ramsay, who was a man of great research, which I shall read to you just now, though it refers not to Destructionism but Universalism. It is from his work entitled, 'Philosophical Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion.' After alluding to some other opinions, he says, 'These absurd errors and mixtures have nothing in common with that pure doctrine of Restitution, which we have explained, and which the Church never condemned. On the contrary, several primitive fathers, such as St Jerome and St Augustine, after having strongly combated this doctrine, say they will no longer dispute with the merciful doctors who maintain it, but leave all to the secret judgment of God, whose ways are unsearchable and past finding out; and so exhort to talk cautiously of this doctrine, lest it flatter the passions,' &c. 'In conformity to these two great lights of the Christian Church, the pastoral body never condemned the doctrine of Restitution as absolutely false and impossible.'

"Eternism, however, gained the day, and the doctrine was too congenial with the spirit of the Romish Church to make it a matter of surprise that she should give it the advantage of her authoritative sanction. If, in order to increase her own spiritual power and pelf,

she consigned her faithful sons to temporary punishment in purgatorial flames, it was little wonder that, with a similar object, and to preserve consistency, she should have threatened those beyond her pale with everlasting fire. I cannot see the justice of Dr Hamilton's implied allegation, that the Protestantism of some of the Continental Churches, especially that of Switzerland, is to this day suffering from the early entrance of non-Eternist views."

Mr M.—"No, that would only be fair (if even then) on the supposition of those opinions having had a prevalence and a hold, of which there seem no proofs."

Fred.—"In our own times it is well known, that amongst the laity generally, and even the clergy, Dissenting and Established, there is a growing disbelief in Eternist doctrine. Elizabeth, my love, will you read what Mr White says on the subject in his preface?"

Elizabeth.—"After alluding to Mr Foster, he says, 'I think it, however, of more importance to state in this place, in order to diminish the impression that all silence is to be construed into consent, that I had it from the last named distinguished writer, in a letter on the negative side of the subject, with which he favoured me in 1841, but which I am not at liberty to publish at the present time, that *a number of ministers, not large, but of great piety and intelligence*, within his acquaintance, had been disbelievers in the doctrine in question (the eternal existence of the wicked in misery), at the same time, not feeling themselves imperatively called upon to make a public disavowal, content with employing in their ministrations strong general terms in denouncing

the doom of impenitent sinners. For one thing, a consideration of the unreasonable imputations and unmeasured suspicions apt to be cast on any publicly declared partial defection from rigid orthodoxy, has made them think they should better consult their usefulness by not giving a prominence to this dissentient point; while yet they made no concealment of it in private communications, or in answer to serious inquiries.'

"Mr White adds, 'In self-defence I may add to this instructive and remarkable testimony, my own, that I, also, am acquainted with several very excellent and accomplished ministers of the gospel and editors of religious periodicals similarly situated.'

Mrs M.—"Well, I must say, I think it is very doubtful how far such men are to be justified in continuing connected with religious bodies."

Fred.—"That is a difficult practical question, which each man's conscience must determine for itself. I do not myself think that any general law can be laid down on the subject. Of one thing, however, my dear Mrs Merton, there can be no doubt, the harshness and acrimony, the imputations and suspicions, on the part of their Christian brethren, to which those who have denied this doctrine have in so many cases been subjected, and which have driven them, rightly or wrongly, to the partial suppression which you blame, are themselves highly blameable. The case here appears to me extremely different from that which we too often see exemplified of men joining the Church of England, for instance, the whole spirit of whose theology can only by the most far-fetched accommodation be reconciled with her articles, homilies, or creed. Those other men we are

speaking of, though differing from the evangelical bodies to which they have united themselves on this highly important question of Eternism, yet feel one with them in heart on the essentials, because the vital points of Christianity."

Elizabeth (to Mrs Merton).—"You spoke about presumption. It has often struck me that great mistakes are made as to what constitutes presumption in matters of belief. This has to do not so much with the end arrived at as the mode of arriving at it. There may be presumption on the side of the majority, and humility not only with the minority, but even in insulation, if there is the conviction that God himself led us into that insulation. To have God for our guide, does not more inspire confidence than it is fitted at any rate to infuse humility."

Mr M.—"Large views of human life and the prevalence of truth teach us the folly and the incorrectness of intellectual pride; for they shew us that neither transcendent abilities, nor even high moral and spiritual worth can secure the adoption of objective truth. This is a matter which, it seems to me, depends in a peculiar manner on the sovereignty of God, which is directed by considerations far too profound and too subtle to be interpreted by us."

For two or three days after this there was no theological conversation amongst the friends. On the evening succeeding the above detailed discussion, Mrs Merton had a party of friends at her own house. The next day was Sunday, when they went to an evening service, and the day after they all dined out. Frederic, who sat nearly opposite to his wife at dinner, and who, bridegroom like, often took greater pleasure in looking at her

than in making any other use of his eyes, observed, that on hearing something which struck her from a lady opposite, Elizabeth cut short a pleasant train of talk she had entered on with the gentleman who sat next her, and was so intent listening to the lady's conversation, she actually did not hear a remark he soon afterwards addressed to her. Frederic knew it was not in Elizabeth's nature to be rude; she could not have been so even had she wished; but he himself had heard what arrested her attention, and therefore understood it all. The words which had so strongly interested Elizabeth were these:—"He is a very learned man. He has been for some years engaged in translating the New Testament from some ancient MSS."

The lady's interlocutor, who was an English clergyman, added, "Especially, I believe, from the most ancient of all—the Vatican manuscript."

"I suppose scholars think it a very important thing to have a correct Greek text."

"Yes, certainly. No one can pay any attention to the subject, and not look on that as a matter of first importance."

"But are the differences considerable between the earlier and the later manuscripts?"

"They are not so trifling as some have supposed. They do not affect doctrinal questions. One valuable result of searching into those older sources will, I believe, be to clear up some apparent discrepancies in the Gospel narrative. Rather a remarkable thing is, that the MSS. of highest authority all omit the story of the woman taken in adultery, in the beginning of the eighth chapter of John, which may lead us to suppose it spurious."

"That will be a subject of regret, I imagine," said

a gentleman sitting near, "to some of our modern moralists."

"I believe there are some lax notions on the subject springing up amongst us," replied the clergyman, "so apt are men to go from one extreme to another." He said this, however, in a tone somewhat dry and final, so that the other saw it would be better to let the matter drop, at least for the present.

"Why was it," said the lady, "that our Authorised Version was not made from the old manuscripts?"

"There were none of them known to those who compiled the Greek text on which our national translations were founded. It was barely known that some such ancient MSS. existed, but their contents had not yet been exhibited. Erasmus, whose first Greek edition was the basis of the *textus receptus*, though it is acknowledged on all hands that he made a diligent and judicious use of the materials then available, had access only to eight MSS. (instead of the two hundred now extant), and none of these older than the tenth century. As respects the *talents* necessary for such a work, I should imagine he was the fittest man of his age. But scholars in his day had much to learn in the way of the establishment and application of right tests of the worth of MSS. and various readings."

Frederic was sure that his wife would take an opportunity, when the ladies withdrew, to prosecute her inquiries, so he left it to her to do so. Soon after joining the party in the drawing-room, he came up to Elizabeth, and said in a low tone, "Well, my Lilly, have you made any inquiries yet about the new translator? Is it the right one?"

She shook her head, and said, "No, he is quite a

young man ;” and the tears actually started into her eyes.

“ But we shall find him one day, the dear old man. I feel sure of that. Cheer up, my child ; we shall certainly find him.”

The two gentlemen spent the most of the following day at Manchester, visiting various manufactories there. The ladies remained behind, and employed themselves in making several morning calls in Liverpool and Birkenhead.

When the gentlemen returned in the evening, one of the first things Mrs Merton said was, “ Whom do you think we fell across to-day, William ? Who but Mr Lloyd, who is come to spend a week or two with his brother here. We were sitting on one of the benches in the park at Birkenhead, when, to my surprise, he came up and accosted me. I thought this such an excellent opportunity of introducing him to Mrs Somers, and, never doubting her being quite agreeable, very soon and eagerly, I assure you, I introduced the subject of future punishment. Well ! what do you think ? I don’t know how you will explain it, Mr Somers. She told me afterwards to have a little patience, and you would explain it. Mrs Somers, naughty creature, would scarcely speak to the good old man. She actually left it almost entirely to me to defend Destructionism, and attack his Universalism !”

“ You did very little more than attack Universalism,” said Elizabeth, with a smile.

“ Well, but why did you not speak ? I assure you, if she had been a miss in her teens, and he a young man of twenty-five, she could hardly have been more shy.”

Frederic looked at Elizabeth, and seeing her half-

ashamed, half-amused expression, burst into a hearty laugh. "My poor little wife! What a dilemma for her to be placed in, and she so fond of theological discussions too, and such a favourite subject!"

Mr Merton's honest eyes looked first at Elizabeth and then at her husband, for an explanation. The latter soon recovered his composure, and turning to Mrs Merton, said, "I suppose my wife left it to me, then, to explain to you how she could not join with you in attacking Mr Lloyd's Universalism, because she herself is a Universalist."

Mrs Merton opened her eyes a little wider, and said, "But I thought you, as well as Mr Somers, believed in Destruction."

"Yes," said Elizabeth, looking down, "but I believe in both."

On this Mr Merton threw himself down on an easy-chair, and exclaimed, "That German mysticism, how it does infect us! Not even the most clear-minded and honest-hearted can escape its influence. Commend me to the old divines, whose opinions were at least intelligible both to themselves and others."

Frederic went up and stood with his back to the fire, and turning to his friend, who sat near, said, "I hope I shall be able to shew you, my dear Merton, that neither Elizabeth nor I have vague and misty views—our scheme is quite definite; and I hope you will find it perfectly intelligible, though it requires some pretty severe stress of metaphysical reasoning, I must confess, to reconcile those two doctrines of Destruction and Universalism. This is, indeed, the tug of war, the *pons asinorum*. To give you, however, at once a little light on the subject, I must tell you that we believe there is not only a resur-

rection of the body, but a resurrection of the soul—that just as the body dies and is alive again, so is it with the soul.”

Mr Merton, who had listened with the deepest interest, now started up from his chair, and exclaimed as he stood by the fire—“That is, indeed, a most fascinating theory; but I am afraid it is nothing but a theory. You can surely find no trace of that in the Bible.”

“The Bible does not, I think you will agree, contain a great deal of theory in an elaborated form, and yet theory is quite necessary in order to understand the Bible, or even remotely appreciate its contents. What are the doctrines of the fall, the consequent universal depravity, the federal relation respectively of Adam and Christ to mankind, or a portion of them, the philosophy of substitution, regeneration, the doctrines of free will or of necessity, but various theories involved more or less distinctly in the facts of Scripture (for all fact involves theory), though not broadly stated there.”

“I suppose,” said Mr Merton, “it will not do to give the fag-end of an evening to this formidable argumentation. We must reserve the tug of war for to-morrow.”

“Before entering on that, however,” said Frederic, “I should like to give you the history of my adoption of this scheme. You know Charles Rivers. You were not much acquainted with him at college, but I have written to you frequently of him since. We were strongly attached to each other, and I was much with him the last six months of his life. He died, you are aware, in the beginning of this year. We had some deeply-interesting theological discourse together during those months; and it was from him I received the outline and principal arguments for the scheme I am now laying before you.

He himself was led to adopt it in rather a singular way. He had long been a Universalist, and delighted with his whole soul in the doctrine of the final salvation of all, when he fell in with Mr Edward White's "Life in Christ," then just published, and felt it impossible to close his mind to the great force of the arguments there given for Destruction. A painful conflict ensued in his mind, which led him to agonising prayer. What he regarded, I believe rightly, as a gracious answer, came by means of what we should call a mere chance occurrence. His sister, by no means a very thoughtful person, told him one day that a friend of hers had informed her there was an elderly gentleman who had been for years engaged in a new translation of the New Testament, founded on the most ancient manuscripts. His religious views were said to be somewhat singular, and in particular his belief with respect to future punishment, was something between Universalism and Destructionism. Rivers caught eagerly at this information, and, as he was confined to the house, at his request the young lady was very soon brought to see him, and give him further particulars. She was a pleasing girl, interested in Divine things, and of a somewhat speculative turn. Unhappily, she was not able to tell much of the old gentleman. She did not know where he lived, nor did she even know his name. Her brother had heard of him quite accidentally while travelling in Scotland, from a young man of very interesting, delicate appearance, whose name he did not learn, but with whom, whilst sailing on Loch Katrine and Loch Lomond, he had had some most memorable intercourse. All that the young lady could tell Rivers of the opinions of the unknown translator was this, that he founded his reconciliation of the two doctrines on

President Edwards' theory of personal identity. He maintains, perhaps you know, that the Deity alone has strict personal identity; in the creature it can only be *constituted*. Now, what was peculiar to the unknown was his belief that this identity could be *re-constituted*, after being broken. He said, indeed, it was likely there were interstices or pores, inappreciable by the finite understanding, in the continuity of every created intelligence, which in the different stages of being might be widened into gaps of non-existence, and yet the identity continue. This idea being supplied to Rivers, he returned to interpret his Bible by means of it, and was astonished to find how clear everything now appeared. He imparted his more mature scheme to me, and this, if you will allow me, I shall endeavour to convey to you. But, as you say, it must not be to-night."

CHAPTER IV.

PERSONAL IDENTITY.

MR MERTON, going to the library soon after breakfast on the following day, found Mr Somers there reading, and with a manuscript on the table before him. "I am looking," he said, "at 'Edwards' Treatise on Original Sin.' Have you ever studied this part in which he treats the question of Personal Identity?"

"Oh, yes! I have long been a convert to his views on that subject."

"I am very glad to hear it. I thought of proposing you should, in the course of this day, if you have time, read to yourself a paper I have written on this subject, in its bearing on the doctrine we were next to discuss. The question, in order to be understood at all, requires rather close reasoning, and I am afraid it might weary Mrs Merton."

"Perhaps it might; but I am delighted to find you have a paper already written. Pray give it to me."

He sat down and began reading it at once. Frederic left the room before it was concluded, to fulfil an engagement with his wife. I shall give the paper almost entire, but may tell such of my readers as find this continued chain of metaphysical reasoning too irksome, that they may probably be able to follow out the argument

sufficiently well by passing on to the conversation in the evening.

MR SOMERS' PAPER.

One of the most favourite, and perhaps the strongest arguments adduced against the doctrine of the future destruction of the impenitent soul, is that founded on the philosophical fact of the indestructibility of matter. Conceding to the objector, in the meantime, the full benefit of the analogy, I would remark that, properly speaking, matter is at every instant perishing, and in its place fresh matter issuing from the creating hand of God. The only difference between this constant action and His first act in creating, is that each particle of matter now has had its predecessor, for which it is substituted, and to which it is attached by a kind of constituted identity. And the very same thing is true of all created existence. Let me here quote some of President Edwards' reasoning on the subject, to which I would strongly advise every one who wishes really to investigate this subject, to devote that close attention and deep thought, which it requires and deserves. "It may be demonstrated," he says, "that this oneness of created substance existing at different times, is a merely *dependent* identity; dependent on the pleasure and sovereign constitution of Him who *worketh all in all*. This will follow from what is generally allowed, and is certainly true, that God not only created all things, but continually preserves them and upholds them in being." This he argues, by shewing that it would be unnecessary for God to preserve them, if their future existence depended on (*i.e.*, was secured by) their antecedent existence, as then they would continue to exist without His help.

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Their existence, therefore, at any moment must depend solely and immediately on the will of God. "For to suppose that its antecedent existence (antecedent existence of created substance) *concurs* with God in efficiency, to produce some *part* of the effect, is attended with all the very same absurdities which have been shewn to attend the supposition of its producing it wholly. Therefore, the antecedent existence is nothing, as to any proper influence or assistance in the affair; and consequently *God* produces the effect as much from *nothing*, as if there had been nothing *before*. So that this effect differs not at all from the first creation, but only *circumstantially*; as in *first* creation there has been no such act and effect of God's power *before*: whereas, His giving existence afterwards *follows* preceding acts and efforts of the same kind, in an established order." He then goes on to prove that each of these successive creative acts of God produces a new effect, and so "there is no identity or oneness in the case but what depends on the arbitrary constitution of the Creator, who by His wise sovereign establishment so unites these successive new effects, that *He treats them as one*, by communicating to them like properties, relations, and circumstances; and so leads us to regard and treat them as *one*. When I call this an *arbitrary constitution*, I mean that it is a constitution which depends on nothing but the *Divine will*; which will depends on nothing but the *Divine wisdom*." He, in a note, illustrates this constituted oneness by the images in a glass, which to us appear precisely the same, "with a continuing perfect identity," but which philosophers know to be the constantly renewed effects of new rays of light.*

* "Treatise on Original Sin." Part iv.

This train of reasoning has been introduced as a necessary preliminary to the propounding of what is peculiar in the scheme about to be advocated.

The doom of the wicked being so explicitly declared in Scripture to be destruction, and it being only by the utmost misapplication of the meaning that this can be understood as signifying a corrective punishment, ending in reformation and happiness, any more than an eternal preservation in misery, what are we to say to those numerous and equally explicit texts which tell of the final recovery and bliss of all? The two truths can be united into one harmonious whole only by the grand, yet simple, idea of REVIVAL.

Destructionists are right in proclaiming that the doom of the wicked, after suffering the torments of hell, is loss of being. God's creating hand is held back, and the creature is blotted out of existence. But this is not the eternal issue. This is the death which is the wages of sin, and it may be followed by a long period of non-existence. But Christ, who in his character of a peculiar Saviour to his immediate people has purchased for them *escape* from this death, has, in his character of Saviour of all, obtained for all the rest *recovery* from it.

The objection will very naturally arise, "How can a being once destroyed, and called into existence again, be the same being? In reality, these must be two distinct individuals." In order to dispose of this objection, and efface from our minds the feelings that naturally ally themselves with it, we must keep our view steadily fixed on certain well-established first principles. If we recur to President Edwards' train of thought, we shall see that, if that profound thinker and proverbially close reasoner be right, a strict personal identity is limited to

the Supreme Being, and a constituted identity is all that the creature can possess. Now as, by His wise constitution of things, existence the product of one creative act, and existence the product of the next creative act, are linked together so as to be treated and viewed as one; and as by the process being continued, existence at death is linked into unity with existence at birth, separated though they may be by seventy years, is it for us to say that this same chain of constituted identity may not link together two species of existence separated by a chasm, and even a wide chasm, of non-existence?

As the above view of personal identity is an important element in the scheme of Universalism which is here unfolded, it is desirable to devote to it a very particular consideration. This is not a question to be decided by authority; were it so, we might find it one of difficult decision, since we have Locke, Butler, Reid, Sir William Hamilton, and modern opinion in general, on one side, and Edwards, Plato, Proclus, Plutarch, and the ancients generally on the other. Not to enter into the minutiae of the question, I think we may consider the argument against us, independent of its moral bearings (which, for reasons that will be afterwards apparent, may be here omitted), as summed up in this:—"Our personal identity is an ultimate fact of consciousness; all reasoning, therefore, which involves its denial is suicidal, as all reasoning must ultimately rest on facts of consciousness; and if consciousness deceives us in one thing, we cannot trust it in another. Hence we may doubt its testimony if we choose, but we can never *prove* anything that contradicts it."

Now, the fallacy here seems to arise from a misappli-

cation of terms. Consciousness is simply the present recognition by the conscious subject of itself, and of the various states and modifications itself undergoes; and its testimony goes not beyond this sphere. Facts of consciousness are divided into two classes, the first of which, in one sense, end in consciousness itself, while others have a clear relation to an outer reality. These are described as consciousness of what I *feel*, and consciousness of what I *believe*. But, in either case, the *ultimate* fact is simply a subjective one. Belief, as well as feeling, is a modification of the *ego*. Hence we see that consciousness must not be made responsible for the *correspondence* of anything in the conscious subject with an objective reality. If I believe that the world is flat instead of round, all that consciousness has to do is to report faithfully as to my belief; it has nothing to do with the absolute truth of the proposition.

If we thus restrict the testimony of consciousness within its due bounds, we shall all agree that it is never fallacious. It is impossible for any one to conceive this testimony to be fallacious, for the belief in it is necessary. It is impossible for me to feel and believe without believing that I feel and believe. Yet neither can we *prove* this testimony true, because it is ultimate. I cannot believe that I feel and that I believe, on any other ground than that I *do* feel and believe. But this is quite sufficient. There can be no greater necessity than the necessity of fact.

But it would indeed be an unsatisfactory state of things, if we could only arrive at absolute certainty with respect to the modifications of our own *ego*. On the contrary, there are certain objective truths, our belief in which is as ultimate and necessary as in these subjective

ones. I am no more certain that the half appears *to me* less than the whole, than that it in reality is so. My belief in this last truth is necessary, for I cannot know the half (*i. e.*, conceive of it) but as less than the whole. It is ultimate; for I have no other reason for believing this proposition *but* my believing it. Here again, however, I am perfectly satisfied with the ground I go upon, as no certainty can be greater than that derived from necessity of conception.

Now, all knowledge that does not come under one of these two heads must be derived from inference; and however great our confidence in the faculties by means of which, and the processes through which, we have arrived at belief in it, we cannot have the same guarantee of its absolute truth as in the other cases.

Let us proceed to consider under which of these classes personal identity must be placed. First, Is it itself an ultimate fact of consciousness? If it is, it must be an immediate fact, for, as I believe all writers on the subject have maintained, consciousness is an immediate knowledge. Let us take in connexion with this that principle on which Sir W. Hamilton, in his notes on Reid, so frequently and justly insists, that we can have an immediate consciousness only of the present: "The past cannot be known in itself, but only in the present, that is mediately." We can therefore have an immediate consciousness only of our present existence, and of the past only a mediate knowledge. But, in order to have an immediate consciousness of the identity of our present and past existence, we should require to have an *immediate* consciousness of them both. Therefore personal identity cannot, properly speaking, be an

immediate fact of consciousness, nor therefore a fact of consciousness at all.

But along with the consciousness of present existence, there is a consciousness of a certain impression or impressions made on the present *ego* (namely, on the memory), which very naturally, and with much strength, refer to a past reality as having caused them. That this inference, however, is not strictly necessary may be proved by one or two facts. First, those results of reasoning which are strictly necessary are of such a nature, that, if we believe them at all, we must believe them with such a perfect certainty that nothing could increase it. If I see that twice three is six, I never can be more sure of the fact than I am at present. It is not so with the testimony of memory. I may have at present a vague recollection of a certain thing having happened. This idea may grow in clearness till I am almost certain of the reality of the occurrence, but then a doubt may arise, and I may end in regarding it as a trace of some very vivid dream.

And not only is the mode of arriving at certainty, different in the two cases, but, as I have said before, the certainty itself is of a different nature. The belief in necessary truth consists in a rigorous development of a necessity of conception. That, in the ultimate facts of consciousness, is nothing else than a sense of the necessity of fact. I know that, however my mind had been constituted, vice could never have been more noble than virtue, and while I am conscious of a certain impression, it must remain a *fact* that I am conscious of it. But as to the inference that this impression actually corresponds to a positive past actuality, for this I cannot

see the same necessity; I must, with all my certainty of its doing so, still feel that it is in itself *conceivable*, that after all this impression should be a delusion. My reason acknowledges the possibility that a being should be created with a firm belief of having seen and done certain things which he had never seen and done.

Still from the general harmony of memory with itself, and with the consciousness of others, and from other causes, we do practically trust its testimony, when we can with certainty ascertain what that testimony is, which from its own imperfection and our misinterpretations, is only to a limited extent practicable. To look on memory as an inherently mendacious witness (and here I include in memory not only the present representation, but the accompanying inference of its correspondence with fact), would be almost as fatal to reasoning and to practical life, as to distrust reason itself or consciousness. The supposed verdict of memory therefore, in favour of personal identity, is worthy of serious consideration.

There is always involved in an act of memory some reference to the being that remembers. It may be thus translated—I did that deed; I saw that object; I learnt that fact. My attention may be chiefly directed to the *deed*, the *object*, and the *fact*, but this connexion with myself must be understood. Now, whether self or the fact connected with self, forms my chief contemplation, it is clear that self here is viewed as an *object*, and therefore the same rules must be applied to it as to other objects in the memory. As these cannot be directly known by sense, inference must be brought in to decide upon them; and it is here that we may apply those lines of Lucretius, wherein he points out that in

the supposed deceptions of sense, it is not sense itself that is in fault, but our inferences from it.

"Quoniam pars horum maxima fallit,
Propter opinatus animi, quos addimus ipsi,
Pro visis ut sint, quæ non sunt sensib' visa."—Lib. iv.

Accordingly these inferences not being necessary, they may be corrected. To take an example—A certain man, from a defect of vision, cannot distinguish between red and green. To him, therefore, these two colours are identical. Is he therefore obliged to believe that they are so in reality? No; he feels that consciousness only witnesses to an identity of *impression* on his *ego*, not an actual identity; and by certain processes of sure reasoning, he learns to believe firmly that these two colours are in reality distinct. If we were to make the application here suggested, to the alleged testimony of consciousness to personal identity, it might be objected, "The man here instanced is able to appeal to the senses of others to correct his own. This would not be possible in the case of a universal delusion." Careful scrutiny into the case will, however, shew that the man must after all depend on his own consciousness, for how can he know what others say or think, but by means of those senses whereby he holds communication with them? If, therefore, it is possible for a single man to correct the *natural inference* to which one fact of consciousness would lead, by means of other facts, so may a whole race of men.

We may apply this rule to Edwards' illustration of the image in the glass. Let us carefully examine the facts of the case. I am conscious directly of a certain present impression, and indirectly of certain past impressions; and as these are perfectly coincident with one

another, and with my present impression, I may infer them to be all identical, *i.e.*, one and the same effect of one and the same outward cause. But in this I should be mistaken, as by means of other ascertained facts it has been proved, that the immediate cause of the image is a ray of light, which at the next moment will be succeeded by another ray, to produce in its turn another image. Now, with regard to the soul, I am conscious directly of a certain present existence, and also indirectly of certain past existings, which, whether exactly coincident in other respects or not, at least agree in this, in their *one* relation to my present consciousness. If, however, I infer from this coincidence their *identity*, or in other words regard them as one single effect, I shall be mistaken, as reason may deduce from other facts they are each a separate result of God's creative energy.

Some, however, may demur to this reasoning, and maintain that the fact that I appropriate those past actions to myself shews that the being who performed them was identically the same product of creative action with my present *ego*. "How can my first *ego* be *my ego* at all," it may be said, "unless it is numerically the same with my present?" This inference I reject. This is indeed the point of divergence of my opinion from that usually held.

I also hold that the creature is subjectively and objectively one throughout its course—that it regards itself so far as remembrance reaches—and is regarded by other beings, so far as they are able to identify it—but that, above all, it is regarded by God himself as one single individual in all its stages; but I maintain that this individuality is produced, not by the unity of

identity, but the unity of *correlation*. I do not feel, in considering these past acts, that *my present ego* did them; on the contrary, they may be of such a nature that it is physically and morally incapable of performing them; but I feel that they were performed by a being with whom my actual *ego* regards itself as identified, and feels itself so bound up as that they form different parts of one single whole. And this is the way in which other beings also feel with respect to me.

Here, as in many other cases, we may draw an analogy between time and space, and also illustrate the immaterial by the material. Why do we call any individual object—a tree, for instance—one? Is it not because of the relation which the different parts bear to one another? It is not that this leaf is an identical product with that leaf, or the trunk with the branches, but that they are all bound together by a certain bond of unity, so as to form one individual? Now we see, in the case of the tree, it is only a constituted individuality; any leaf of it I may touch *might* have belonged to another tree of the same species, and so it is with the soul. Any portion of its existence might have been united to another individuality, whereas the individuality of God is necessary. No portion of His existence could have belonged to any other being. But creative individuality, though constituted, is not the less real. That leaf *might* have belonged to another tree, but it *does* belong to this one only. All the portions of my past life have belonged, and those of my future life will belong to *me*, and to no other person.

Individuality, therefore, being allowed, and all the consequences as to responsibility and the possibility of moral government flowing from it being also conceded,

let us consider whether there are any conditions essential to it which shall preclude its extending to an existence extremely different from the present, and also divided from it by a gulf of non-existence. 1st, Is resemblance necessary? No, surely not. It is not so even in this life. That must indeed be a much assisted eye that could in any case trace a resemblance between the unformed features of the babe of a day old, and that same babe brought through youth and manhood to the time of silver hairs. And greater still is the difference between the *mind* and *soul* of the little suckling and those of the great philosopher he has perhaps since become. And not only are the various marked stages thus unlike, the changes throughout the earthly career for being gradual are not the less real. The substituted particles of the body, the successive volitions of the soul, must have varied to some amount, and the very least is enough to serve the argument. Is co-extensive memory necessary? It is scarcely to be supposed that this opinion could be deliberately maintained by any, though it is a very natural deduction from Locke's doctrine, that "personal identity consists in the consciousness that we are the same thinking thing in different times and places." This definition of identity has, however, been objected to and refuted by Reid and others, on the ground that truth must be independent of our knowledge of that truth, and that in fact that identity which we all allow unites the different stages of our being, in the case of all extends far beyond the pale of memory. When I hear from others of what I did when a child of three years old, I do not doubt *my* having done what is related, though I am utterly unconscious of having done it.

But it was a possible case that, while the remoter links of the chain should become detached, there should have been *one* chain of consciousness running the whole length of the life. The end of this lustrum might be unconnected with the beginning of the last, much of this day's consciousness even might be broken off from tomorrow's memory, and each moment might still hand over to its successor something which connected it with its predecessor. Even this condition, however, is not observed between the sleeping and the waking states, and in cases of somnambulism we see, in the passing into and the issuing from the state, perfect and sudden separations of consciousness. There have been recorded cases, too, in which the whole past has become a blank to memory, and yet identity remained. The illustration of somnambulism leads to an interesting suggestion. We see here, not only consciousness broken, but consciousness rejoined. In passing from this state to their ordinary life, people often recollect what happened the other side of the interval, while forgetting what passed during the interval itself. *In itself*, then, it is not inconceivable that the soul, when recalled into being, should remember its existence this side of the chasm; but it seems, on other grounds, very unlikely that this connected consciousness should exist, as it could scarcely add to the happiness of the advanced being to retain, even in its memory, the stain of former guilt and wretchedness.

But it is said, though continuity of consciousness is not necessary for individuality, continuity of existence is. The same being that once ceases to exist *never can* be considered as prolonged in any creature afterwards to be called into existence. This objection may be made

by some who do not maintain strict personal identity. "It is true," they may say, "the creature's existence here is the result of repeated successive acts of the Creator, but these acts follow each other so continuously that they may be considered as one prolonged action, and the existence produced thereby be, in one sense, regarded as one prolonged effect. We see here a very natural foundation for individuality, which would be lost if a break in the being were supposed." Now, I think this view might be strongly objected to, on the score of the innumerable *changes* in the being during the earthly career. It seems strange to call the existence of the babe the *same* effect with that of the man, when in its character it is so utterly different. But, at all events, this supposed continuity of action and of effect must not be insisted on as a necessary condition for individuality, as it cannot be proved even now to exist. We cannot be *sure* that there are not breaks even in our present apparently continuous existence. Consciousness can only tell us of existence; it will be silent as regards non-existence; therefore our only subjective proof of continuity of existence is in the strict continuity of our consciousness. Is it possible, however, for us to be certain of this? On the contrary, that is a point in which we are very likely to be deceived. May it not be that *sense not perceiving gaps, judgment infers continuity*? It has been so with matter. Our natural impression is, that the particles of compact bodies are in direct contact, but experiments (*e. g.*, the well-known one of pressing water through gold) have proved that the ultimate atoms of even the densest masses are separated from one another by minute pores of unoccupied space. Is it not possible then, that, with regard to the soul, the existence pro-

duced by one creative act is divided from that which is the result of the next creative act, by a very minute, inappreciable interval of non-existence.* It is not necessary to affirm that this is the case; all that the argument requires is, that it be granted that, though it should prove to be so, it could not interfere with the individuality of the soul any more than the interstices in the matter of which it is composed, disturbs the individuality of a material object. And if a small interval of non-existence would not interfere, why should a long one with an individuality constituted by God, with whom a thousand years are but as one day?

But though this strict continuity of re-creation could be proved to exist during this stage of being, still would the individuality formed thereby be only a constituted one. The whole being of God is the result of a necessary sequence, but it is not so with the creature. It is quite conceivable that different portions of its individual existence should have been subtracted, and parts now separated joined together; their order might have been transposed; or, as will perhaps be more immediately felt, the being might have stopped short at an earlier period. If, therefore, the latter portion of any individual's existence did not *necessarily* belong to him, but was *given* him by God, why may we not suppose that, when this existence does stop short, it is that God is withholding a further portion of it from him for a period, to give it him again in some future age. It is not meant that the relation between that future existence and the present is of exactly the same nature as that which binds this into one. Just as each finger is a whole in itself and also a part of

* This appears to have been the opinion of Plato, who speaks of the creature constantly perishing and constantly being created.

the hand, and each hand a whole and yet a part of the body, so may the individual in each stage of being be regarded as a whole, while yet his interests are so bound up with those related existences that have preceded and are to follow him, that he is still more truly a part with them of one whole.

To expect that this scheme should, in many cases, be immediately and without hesitation received and fully rested in, would argue a very imperfect acquaintance with human nature. There will be preconceived notions in the minds of almost all to hinder its admission. It is well for us all to remember, however, how low and contracted is the subjective point of view, from which, in this prison-world, we can view great and absolute realities. This should lead us, when we may, to avail ourselves of the glorious privilege of grasping by the hand of the subjective the outstretched hand of that Divine guide who will lead us up to the heights of the *objective*, whence, whereas before "man was himself" to himself the only "measure of the universe," now, in some degree, he may view the universe and himself with the eyes of God.

This re-constituted individuality at the revival of the soul may be illustrated by a reference to the current ideas respecting the resurrection of the body. It is generally maintained that the same body that goes down into the grave shall at the resurrection emerge from it. Perhaps it is correct to speak of them as the same: there may be a constituted identity. But in no other sense can there be any. Independent of the constant re-creation of matter, it would be absurd to suppose the risen body to be composed of the representatives even of those particles which mouldered in the dust. These have been

scattered meanwhile to the four winds of heaven, and doubtless also passed into other bodies, so that on that supposition different souls would at the last day have conflicting claims with respect to the particles to compose their bodies. Besides this, it requires an identity, after a lapse of perhaps thousands of years, which subsists not from the beginning to the close of the short span of natural life; for in that time, we know, the particles of our bodies are often renewed, and undergo increase and decrease. We see here, too, how unnecessary is identity of appearance or nature to constitute our conceptions of individuality. I will not agitate the question, whether the body which is sown in corruption, and is to be raised in incorruption, be the literal corporeal frame; but as it has been generally so understood, I may meet my readers on their own ground, and ask them whether they expect there will be much resemblance between the mortal remains of the aged saint—unlovely, disfigured, it may be deformed—and the glorious, godlike form which alone could be worthy of his triumphant soul.

CHAPTER V.

PERSONAL IDENTITY.

WHEN the demure little Miss Kitty, the last of the tribe of youngsters to retire to bed, had given a kiss all round, not omitting her prime favourite, *Uncle Fred*, and then walked sedately out of the room, her papa said, opening his portfolio, "This is a paper of Somers' which I have been reading, my love, and of which I will give you the substance, as I think he was right in supposing it rather tough reading for ladies. He begins by stating the opinion of President Edwards, which he referred to last night, and which was generally maintained by the ancients, that no created being can have strict personal identity. He is the product of a series of repeated acts of the Creator, which acts, and the effects flowing from them, are only bound into unity by the arbitrary constitution of God, that is, one originating in His will. So that you are not strictly the same person, though you are called the same, who at four years old cried when she was washed, a few years later climbed into an apple-tree in my grandfather's garden, and on one occasion clapped her hands with delight at the gift of a pink sash."

Mrs M.—"My consciousness, then, must have been made to deceive me, for it certainly tells me that I am the same."

Mr M.—"Our consciousness, or rather our first and natural inferences from it, often mislead us in these things. For instance, there is no uninstructed man but would think, that the image he sees for five successive minutes in a glass is precisely the same, and yet, as Edwards reminds us, this image is the constantly renewed effect of new rays of light. But what do you mean by your consciousness telling you you are the same being that you were when a child? You don't mean that your present self climbed into the tree, &c., &c.? All that would be much beneath its dignity. All that you mean is that those things were done by a being whom you and others identify with your present self. Now Mr Somers maintains, and I fully agree with him, that our past, present, and future selves are not the same, but they all together form a whole which is *ourself*. Just as in a tree one branch is not the same with another branch, and neither is the same as the trunk, but all together form one tree. It is, he says, in each case a unity, not of identity, but of correlation."

Mrs Merton did not know of any objection to make to this view, and as her husband was satisfied, was inclined to let it pass at any rate. "Well," she said, "supposing we do allow all this as regards this life, does Mr Somers really maintain that the soul can be actually *destroyed* and created again, and still be the same? What is there *now* to constitute it the same being?"

"Nothing," replied Mr Somers, "but the arbitrary constitution of God; but that alone bound it into unity before."

"But then there was memory, likeness, and unbroken consciousness. The body was the same too."

"No," said Frederic, smiling, "it was constantly

changing too. As for memory, the soul, when revived, might have that also. But it is not necessary for identity. You don't remember yourself a baby, and yet you are the same person that you were when a baby. Neither are you at all like what you were then, yet the same. Perhaps you will say, There has been an uninterrupted chain of memory, and consciousness, and resemblance, though we cannot trace it back. But this is not quite true. You probably forget on falling asleep what you were thinking of a moment before, and certainly on waking you often forget your dreams. People have been known to fall into trances, and on recovering from them find the whole past a blank to memory. Accidents and mutilations have sometimes made frightful changes instantaneously in the outer man; and sudden conversions, such as that of Paul, have made as marked a change in the inner nature. And even the changes which are always going on in the quiet flow of each daily course, though small, are not the less real; quite enough to make it unphilosophical to name *sameness* as an element in the identity *we* can possess."

"What you say respecting the resurrection of the body," said Mr Merton, "is very striking. I will read that part to the ladies." He took up Frederic's paper, and read out the last part of what we have given, beginning with, "But it is said, though continuity of consciousness," &c.

After some more conversation on this subject, Mrs Merton said, with a sigh, "Well, if it is true, I think it is a sad doctrine!" "Why is it sad?" said Frederic. Mrs Merton, seeming somewhat puzzled how to reply, Elizabeth said:—"My father has always been a staunch advocate for President Edwards' doctrine, and I have long held it.

But I remember when first I heard it broached, though, when it was fairly stated, and the arguments brought before me, I could not but believe in it, I, too, felt very sad. It seemed as if everything, except God, was crumbling under me. I thought, 'Hitherto, even in my saddest moments, when I have fancied no one loved or pitied me, I have at any rate been able to love and pity myself; but now even this consolation is to be taken away from me. I can no longer go back and think of the little Elizabeth of my childhood, and trace with a tender appropriation all her wanderings, and all God's dealings with her up to this very hour. Surely life itself will now lose all its interest!' But I have not found it so."

"No," said Frederic. "Experience shews us we are poor judges beforehand of what is necessary for our happiness, as well as of what will insure it. I, too, may confidently say, that my interest in my past and future self has not been at all impaired by the firm and clear conviction I have now entertained for many years, whenever it has happened to come before my mind as a subject of definite thought, that it is only by God's arbitrary constitution that they are linked to my present self."

"Ah, but," said Mrs Merton, "so long as we are in this world, imagination will often supply friendly illusions to counteract the stern convictions of the understanding."

"And these, you think, will not be preserved to us in the other world. Well, my dear Mrs Merton," he continued, with a gentle smile, "if any illusion is needed for our happiness even in the world of realities, I believe it will be continued. While we are, as I said, bad judges of our own real wants, our Creator is a perfect judge. Our only security, but it is a sufficient one, for the future as for the present, is in the wisdom and the power of Him

to whom our happiness is dearer than it is to ourselves, and who feels an interest in our individual existence, such as we cannot conceive."

Mr Merton, seeing that Frederic had ceased speaking, said, "Let me read part of what you say here on that subject. 'As His (God's) happiness in our existence is safe from the inroads of any fresh discovery, we may be sure that no truth we may learn throughout the ages of eternity will, when rightly understood, mar our own. If, therefore, as seems likely, the feeling of individuality is necessary to the happiness and the perfection of the creature, we may confide in its enduring in a measure to all eternity; and the knowledge that it is a constituted, and not a necessary individuality, will not diminish its efficacy nor its charm. I would even go further, and say, that the more perfect realisation of this truth in our final state will open the floodgates of a new and ineffable happiness; when, like the rivers in the ocean, we may plunge our own contracted, fleeting, and in one sense fictitious selves, into our true and infinite, and perfect self, in whom we live and move and have our being, who alone hath immortality; who is, indeed, for ever and for ever the same, and whose unoriginated being binds together all created existence.' And now hear this conclusion.

"'What an interesting, what a sublime picture does this view also open to us of the character and the life of the Eternal God! That that unchangeable Being should ever have aroused Himself from an eternity of dreamy reverie to an active existence; or should, when a glorious, stupendous, but bounded plan is accomplished, rest Him again in eternal repose, is no more consonant with revelation, rightly understood, than with reason. He, who is now a creating God, has ever been, and ever will be a Creator.

That overflowing fountain of love has ever found, and will ever find fresh vessels wherein to pour its fulness. How interesting, then, to think that each one of these beings now existing, or ever to exist in the veiled eternity to come, has from the depths of the impenetrable past existed in the mind of God as a distinct entity! And when brought into actual being, with what long-suffering, what perseverance, what unflagging interest and untiring, tender care, is it brought by Him out of the many dangers that threaten its immortality, till it is led safely to its goal, when change shall give place to finality, and progress to perfection. It is in this its high destiny, more than what it is, while during so large a part of its course grovelling in the dust, that the superior dignity of spirit over matter consists. And when we consider what that destiny is, so far as pen can write of it, or heart conceive, we shall not wonder that a high price should have to be paid for it, nor shall we doubt that it is abundantly worth, whatever of fierce agony, whatever of long, dreary blank or blanks of being may have to be undergone in its attainment."

CHAPTER VI.

GOD'S ENDS AND HIS MEANS—PURGATORY—COMBINATION OF THEORY AND OBSERVATION NECESSARY IN THEOLOGY, AS IN ALL OTHER SCIENCES.

IT was proposed that Mrs Merton should go over early next day and see if Mr Lloyd would do them the pleasure of dining and spending the evening with them. She was not to tell him of their friend's Universalism, but leave that to be broached after dinner.

Mr Lloyd with pleasure accepted the invitation. When the ladies withdrew to the drawing-room, Mr Merton opened the subject. The worthy old man was delighted to hail a fellow Universalist, whatever peculiarities were mixed up with his reception of the doctrine. With these peculiarities, however, he was not at all disposed to join in. "Having so long held my own view," he said, "yours seems to me, I must confess, a painful one."

Fred.—"There are not a few Universalists, especially in America, who disbelieve in all future punishment whatever, and who, turning to your view, might call it a painful one. But you would not think that a valid objection to it. You would say, 'It is enough for me that Scripture speaks unmistakably of punishment after death: I must believe in it.' And I must say the same as to destruction."

Mr M.—"I don't wish to interrupt you, but it strikes me, Somers, you are not just now quite consistent with yourself. You maintain that one of the strongest arguments against *Eternism*, is inconsistency with the benevolence of the Creator. You say that eternal misery being essentially so bad a thing, is a proof it does not exist. Well then, if, as compared with the ordinary Universalism, the prospect you hold out is a bad thing, should you not allow that to be a proof that it too is not the true doctrine?"

Fred.—"No; there is this very important distinction. In the one case we are talking about an end, in the other, about the means to attain an end. I think we are quite competent to perceive that an eternity of misery and sin is not a condition to which the love and justice of God can have proposed to themselves to assign any portion of the creation as an end; but still we may not be competent to decide but that in bringing about another result, the wisdom of God may make use of not only suffering, but even the destruction of the soul as a *means*."

Mr L.—"Well, I certainly have heard of some strange fantastic notions of Destruction combined with Universalism, a *soi-disant* destruction of man, which turned out to be nothing more than the destruction of the evil principle in man. But, with all deference to you, Mr Somers, these notions appeared to me so utterly unworthy of the sobriety of Scripture and the God of truth, that I never could bring myself to pay any attention to them. But yours appears to be a different view. You really do appear to believe in the extinction of the soul, and also in its final restoration!"

Mr M.—"I sympathise in your perplexity. Hasten,

if you please, Somers, to explain your view, and then we will rejoin the ladies."

On their return to the drawing-room, Frederic said, "Allow me to re-introduce to you my wife, Mr Lloyd; and this time as an out-and-out Universalist. She has not long held the doctrine; but it is one so suited to her whole nature, that it has closed with it entirely." Elizabeth smiled and said, "I must have appeared cold enough when we met the other day, but you see now I was in a false position."

After tea, Frederic began, "I promise myself much valuable aid from you, Mr Lloyd, in the present stage of our discussion. I look to you to take the lead in the advocacy of Universalism."

Mr L.—"I am a Universalist, because, in the first place (like you, I presume), I see nothing in Scripture that necessarily teaches eternal misery, and secondly, I see much that is inconsistent with such a belief, and only explicable on the ground of the final happiness of all. The first part of the argument, I suppose, you have already discussed."

Fred.—"To a certain extent we have—sufficiently to proceed to the other; we must return to it, however, by and by."

Mr M.—"You must pardon me, my friends, if I stop you in the line of argument you seem about to pursue. I know well you can bring forward many texts which have apparently a very Universalist character. You know I am neither a bigot, nor an uninterested inquirer into truth. I have read Universalist productions; I have wished to believe the doctrine, and my worthy friend, Mr Lloyd, has tried to indoctrinate me into it. But there is one thing I cannot get over, and that is

the slipperiness and uncertainty in the ancient languages of the Universalist words you rely on—*all* and *every*. Why, you Greek scholars know very well you may make what you like of *πας* [*pàs*].”

Fred.—“Not exactly. I believe Greek will be found to be far more amenable to exact rules of interpretation in this matter than has been supposed.”

Mr M.—“Well, we will, with your permission, let that drop for the present. Time and opportunity in this world of change are very precious. Even honeymoons, you know, draw to an end, and the best friends must part. So now, let us not enter on what, so far as bringing conviction to my mind is concerned, would be loss of time—the examination of the *words* of Scripture on this point; but rather turn to the principles involved. I grant, on the one hand, that the words which seem to mean eternal need not mean eternal; but you, too, must grant to me that the words which seem to mean *all* (on which you found the benefit to *all* of Christ’s death) need not bear that meaning. So far, therefore, as the words are concerned, it is impossible to escape from ambiguity.”

Fred.—“Allow me to say, *en passant*, for the remark is not only relevant but really necessary, that many words which, taken unconnectedly, admit of a variety of extension, may be tied down to a certain limitation by a close attention to lexical rules. This is what our translators have much overlooked. Indeed, I should say generally, that, while our translators from the ancient languages, both secular and sacred, have been almost childishly limited in the scope which they have allowed to the meanings of words, they have erred much, on the other hand, in the laxity they have shewn in the appli-

cation of grammatical principles. Our English word *all* has a variety of extension, and so have the corresponding words in all our modern tongues; and yet, by attention to grammatical usage, we almost always contrive to make our meaning unambiguous, and so, I believe, it will be found to be with Greek. But we will drop this subject for the present."

Mrs M.—"One great objection I have always had to your view, Mr Lloyd, is that it seems to me so like the doctrine of Purgatory."

Mr L.—"I think, however, I can prove to you that it is extremely unlike it. The Romish dogma militates against the doctrines of grace in two ways—in the first place, by representing this form of future punishment as awaiting true believers, in order to purge them from their remainder of guilt, it undervalues the work of Christ as being insufficient even for his own people. In this, Universalism totally differs from it. And then this doctrine, as stated by the Romanist, contains the fatal element of self-righteousness, by representing the believer's sufferings as meritorious. You will admit with me—will you not?—that the sacrifice of Christ has two aspects, one penal, the other meritorious. With respect to the first, whatever our views as to the duration of the punishment of the wicked, we must consider it as corresponding in their instance to the vicarious sufferings of Christ in that of the righteous. In both cases justice is satisfied. The sufferings in both cases are penal. But so far as Christ's sacrifice is also meritorious, as it purchases for Christ's own, in addition to exemption from future suffering, their future bliss, glory, and immortality, not only does Universalism, unlike Romanism, leave it with its honour unimpaired, but it

adds to that honour. It tells of something beyond the partial benefit to the elect. It looks on them but as a kind of first-fruits, an earnest of a far more abundant ingathering, and regards the meritorious efficacy of Christ's death as extending eventually to all the race. Thus, instead of derogating from the work of Christ, it magnifies it."

Mr M.—"Well, if you describe the infliction on the wicked as penal only, I do not so much quarrel with the view; but every Universalist view I have seen represents it as *reformatory*. I see no warrant for this in Scripture."

Mr L.—"But the two things are quite compatible. Will not every wise and kind Ruler endeavour to unite them?"

Mr M.—"Not in the case of capital punishment—if you think that allowable."

Mr L.—"But man is a bungler at the best. *He* may require to have recourse in extremity to desperate measures—the great Ruler does not."

Mr M.—"I cannot think that a legitimate mode of reasoning. You might as well argue that, as amendment often takes place under simply kind treatment, God will not use punishment at all. And then you must go further, and account for the painful discipline He causes His people to undergo in this life. It is a dangerous principle to infer, from what God *could* do, what He *will* do. It is a principle which will lead us into constant mistakes."

"What do you say to that, Frederic?" said Elizabeth, who had been following this conversation with the deepest interest. "I have heard you remark that our previous knowledge of the character even of human

beings should be taken into account in estimating the worth of the evidence concerning their conduct and intentions in particular instances, and that this holds good much more of God, whose character is so perfect and so certain."

Fred.—"Yes, but remember the distinction between means and ends. Mr Lloyd judges, and I think rightly, that God cannot rest in anything short of the complete amendment of all His sinful creatures; but when He declares that that amendment is to be, in the case of the unrepentant, brought about instrumentally by the sufferings of hell, I differ from him. This is not a point to be determined by speculation. It appears to me mere folly to *speculate* on the means God will employ for the attainment of His great ends. We do not do so in the physical kingdom. We know, for instance, that man is made to breathe, eat, and digest, but we do not *speculate* as to the inward machinery employed for the carrying on of these processes; by means of anatomy and physiology we observe and *learn*."

Elizabeth.—"It seems to me that it must be an extremely difficult thing to determine how far our ideas in theology are to interpret our information supplied us in the Bible, and how far the information is to correct our ideas."

Fred.—"I do not think we can find any royal rule in this matter; but students of theology should take example and warning from the history of discovery in other branches of knowledge. Let us take the history of the inductive sciences, and for convenience refer to Dr Whewell's work, where it is given in a connected form, and we shall see how various grand mistakes arrested the current of discovery, and caused it ever and

anon to form into stagnant pools, instead of gliding on in a widening and fertilising stream. The history of theology has, I think, been quite similar; but unfortunately in regard to it some of the principal mistakes have scarcely begun to be corrected."

Mr M.—"You surprise me. Surely we are not so retrograde as you would make out. I should say that in our two grand Protestant principles—the Bible alone as our authority, and private judgment alone as our interpreter—we have the only (human) elements necessary for arriving at pure truth in divine things."

Fred.—"But it is not enough to possess right principles, if we do not rightly apply them. 'The Bible alone as our authority'—that is all right. But how know with certainty what the Bible teaches? 'By means of private judgment,' you say. But even unbiassed judgment is of little avail, unless it use right methods; and it is my decided, sad opinion, that the exercise of private, by which I mean individual judgment, is still under Protestantism, as under the Papacy, little more than a phantom. This is a very important subject. Have you ever turned your attention to it, Mr Lloyd?"

Mr L.—"Not particularly. I should like very much to hear what you have to say upon it."

Fred.—"I think I can soon illustrate my meaning, even if I do not prove my point, which might take a long time. One fundamental, though extremely natural error at the outset of physical inquiry, was that philosophers, like the vulgar, contented themselves with a rapid survey, instead of a patient investigation of nature. As Dr Whewell says, 'They sought to read her at a single glance, instead of learning her alphabet letter by letter.'

Perhaps I was wrong in calling this an error, because it was quite right, as well as natural, as an initial step. The error lay in continuing it too long. It is well that the first observers of any revelation should take a rapid general glance of it, nor should we, if we could, stay the reflections, the ideas which that glance suffices to raise in the truth-fitted spirit. Ideas, for instance, of the order and propriety, harmony and design, which pervade the universe—ideas of likeness, of contrast, of cause and effect. As a matter of history, these things may be first *suggested* by external nature, but the certainty, with which we close with them and retain them can, as Dr Whewell says, only be accounted for by their answering to certain innate convictions of our own minds, certain fundamental principles of our nature. The true method of advance is this, bearing with us these first general principles, to return to the body of objective fact, and interpret it by means of them. New and more special ideas will thus be obtained—laws, not of original thought, but of nature without, the divine application of principles which are independent of any will. And while new ideas will thus be suggested by means of facts, so will the original facts be corrected by means of ideas. For as in all fact there is some theory, so is it scarcely possible but that our first facts should need correction. This is the true method of inductive philosophy. Newton acted on it when, applying the original principles of mathematical truth to the study of the heavens, he discovered the actual laws which regulate the heavenly bodies. By means of theory he read the facts of nature, and then continued to correct his theories by the aid of observation. It is this constant interweaving of the warp of idea with the woof of fact which alone can form science

into a solid tissue. But it was long ere men arrived at the knowledge of this method. They contented themselves with a limited number of those first-named vague facts, which contained much truth, doubtless, and sufficient practical solidity for everyday life, but which, viewed as philosophical conceptions, were too flimsy, too much mixed up with the airiness of false theory, to allow of their being drawn out into connecting threads of genuine application; and on these 'pictured works they hung pictured chains' of subtle and ingenious, but resultless speculation. The effect of this, after a time, was stagnation, and its offshoot, dogmatism. Men, thinking it such an easy thing to read the facts of nature, could only dispute as to the ideas to be derived from them, and as these could not be *proved*, it became the more necessary authoritatively to assert them. Hence different schools arose, in which nature herself was not interrogated, but the master. This gave rise in the end to scepticism. While various learned bodies thus so dogmatically claimed to themselves the sole and the undoubted possession of truth, and truth could not be possessed by all, a body of men arose who doubted not only whether true knowledge existed in any, but whether there were any such thing possible as *knowledge* in the matter. Such was Alzahel, who, before Hume, doubted the possibility of any known connexion between cause and effect."

Mr M.—"Well, now for the application to theology."

Fred.—"Well, I do not mean to say that men started at an equal disadvantage here. Happily, the parallel is not perfect between the book of nature and that of revelation. Nature immediately addresses observation alone, and through it challenges inference. She gives the ma-

terials for system, but furnishes none. But revelation, concerning herself with deeper and more sacred wants of our being, is not so calmly *objective*; she leaves not so much to the casualties of interpretation. Hence there is much truth drawn out and arranged for us there. It is often the idea involved in a fact which gives it its practical value. Thus the fact of Christ's death would be of little comparative use to us unless we knew its object. It is in this form of divinely-explained facts or doctrines that all those truths are given us which are essential to salvation—the doctrines of grace, which depend not on the disputed rendering of certain words, but are involved in the sun-clear tenor of the whole of the Scriptures. So that the childlike, unsophisticated mind, starting from a belief in their perfect inspiration, however harassed on other points, can find here no occasion for doubt.

“But while the great Author of revelation took care that we should have much gold presented to us ready-coined, as it were, and with His own image stamped upon it, and that it should continue in circulation to this day, He left a great deal of truth in the mine of Scripture, to be dealt with like that contained in His other inferior revelations. Moreover, this portion of truth, like the other, was liable not only to concealment, but misinterpretation. As an example of this, the Epistles clearly abound in fine trains of reasoning, which, I must own, appear to me to have been entirely lost to us by mis-translation. Nor, if we consider the case attentively, is this surprising? Not only does not the learned portion of Christendom speak either of the sacred languages, but these languages are not strictly anywhere spoken. They are, as there written, truly dead, and, not only so, but their limbs, like those of Osiris, have been scattered

here and there on the field of literature, and have in many cases been ploughed in beneath the sod ; so that it has been the labour of ages, a labour *very* far from completed yet, to reconstruct the very language itself. It is well known that the knowledge of Greek was at no remote period in a very backward state, compared with what it is now. But to know Greek even was not all that was required, any more than to know English is enough to understand any English book. The Holy Ghost, while employing the language of men, having to convey ideas, and combinations of ideas, which had never occurred to man, was under the necessity of using words in a sense often peculiar to Himself, though, no doubt, as His intention was to be understood *in the end*, He adhered, even in these new applications, to principles which were discoverable and appreciable by men. But for this discovery it is clear that much *theory* is necessary, as much as is required in order to read the facts of nature. If you allow all this, you will see that while, as I said before, much blessed truth is on the very surface of revelation, and the application of that truth is enough to occupy a lifetime, with respect to the great mass of the contents (with the exception of the *purely* narrative portion in the Old Testament), it is an immense mistake to speak and act as if this were the case, and to talk of going to the Bible to learn its meaning, as the child is bid by its mother to look at the clock, and is back in a moment, and gives her the information she desires.

“ But this should not cause us to despair, nor to speak of revelation as if it were no revelation. Those even who are disposed to treat it respectfully, have, I think, almost invariably gone either to the one extreme or the other. They have thought that the Scriptures were *all* so clear

that he who runs may read ; or they have thought it was vain to expect to get a definite and decided meaning out of the major portion at all, and we must simply be content with imbuing ourselves with its general spirit, leaving the *letter* alone. But let us treat the Bible, when we come to investigate its contents, with the same blending of reticence and confidence with which we have learned to approach the facts of nature, and the result will, I doubt not, be in the end an equally satisfying certainty. How different has been our mode of proceeding hitherto, it is painful to reflect. As this is a highly important matter on which we have chanced to fall, you must allow me to dwell a little longer on it.

“Dr Whewell, in his admirable ‘Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences,’ has shewn how by imposing *ideas* supplied from within on a certain number of impressions made on our senses from without, we form a fact, and how, such facts being multiplied, we may again impose on them an idea—*i.e.*, a theory—which shall give them unity and outline, and thus form a higher fact. For he also shews that while the antithesis between theory and fact is constant and essential, there is no fixed and permanent line dividing its members. When theory passes from doubtful ground to one of acknowledged certainty, it becomes fact. Thus, gravitation was once a theory, but is now a fact. Now, translation may be considered as corresponding with that first process of forming a fact. If, therefore, our first idea is wrong, we have a wrong fact to set out with, and a correct theory is afterwards impossible. For in theology, as in any other science, the first thing is to be sure that our facts are true; and one way of doing this is, seeing whether they are compatible with one another.

Truth is harmonious, therefore no true facts can be mutually contradictory,—as, for instance, are the doctrines of God's perfect wisdom, irresistible power, and unchanging love with His abandoning any of His creatures to endless misery. These are facts which no conceivable theory can reconcile. Few have attempted to reconcile them. Most have been contented to hold them apart, as it were, like bitter foes, for whom there is no peace but in separation. This ought to have made people suspect some fallacy in their facts. Instead of this, following in theology the same practice which was common in other sciences, but is now almost exploded in the rest, they contented themselves with theories founded on partial consideration of the facts. Now, a true theory, though it should not include all the facts, is contradictory to none—(one adverse fact would spoil the whole). If any theory answer to this condition, the probability is that it is true so far as it represents the facts which it appears to include, and that it will be absorbed, not destroyed, by some higher generalisation which shall include those hitherto outstanding facts. Certain laws may be positively true, as binding together things which are really connected; but if by their negative element, they *disjoin* other things from them which may afterwards be found to be intimately related, they become in a sense untrue. As an illustration of this, in chemistry at one time all the known acids contained oxygen, which was therefore supposed to be an essential constituent of all such bodies, and received its name on the strength of this supposition; but other substances have since been found to act the same part. The name *oxygen* at first claimed for it the distinction of being *the one* acidifier, and accord-

ing to the then known facts, it deserved the title; but now, to be true, it must be understood to signify *an* acidifier, or perhaps the chief acidifier.

“There has been an exactly similar case in theology. If God’s bestowment of a certain number of souls on Christ, to be his own peculiar body, his Church, to be saved from wrath through him, and consequently to have, with fixed and infallible certainty, secured to them all the gifts pertaining thereto—the outward call, the inward and effectual calling, justification, sanctification, to be followed in the end by glorification;—if all this scheme had been described, as God has described it, as one act in the mighty drama of His purposes, it would have been seen to be in perfect consistence with all the facts—the dicta of natural and revealed religion. But, unhappily, the restrictive tendency of all partial views was here aided from without and confirmed by another positive theory formed into a fact. The monstrous doctrine of eternal misery, and other so-called facts, had also to be included in some large general theory; and a scheme of doctrine, including at once these facts and those of the gospel scheme—an ideal conception, unseemly and unsymmetrical—was formed, which was to be reconciled as best it might with the great truths of God’s perfections. Under one aspect of this theory, God’s final *idea* for His creatures (that for which He made them) was essentially different in different cases. While with some it mounted to the most ecstatic heights of happiness and perfection, with others it descended to the lowest depths of misery and sin; and this idea is consistently worked out, God feeling no repugnance to forming and sustaining these creatures in being for no advantage to themselves, but with incalculable loss and

suffering, to subserve some purpose foreign to their good. Under another form of this theory, it is allowed that God originally loved all His creatures, and desired their eternal well-being. But He is represented as ending either in hating the larger portion of them—though there was no original difference between them to cause so different a feeling and treatment—or, at least, in feeling such indifference to their utter and interminable wretchedness, as with unruffled happiness to purchase by it some other advantage. Both these theories are painfully and palpably inconsistent with God's perfections. While some, therefore, in that necessity for system which is so noble a portion of our nature, perceiving these to be legitimate and necessary deductions from some, to them, undeniable facts, have not shrunk from forming and broadly stating them, others, from a *feeling* of their inconsistency with the character of God, have held back, and with a hesitation unphilosophical in itself, but revealing a hope which is true to a higher philosophy, have looked to another world to solve the enigma unsolvable in this. Few have thought of questioning the preposterous apparent fact which created all the difficulty. Let that be demolished, let the other true facts which are joined with it be released from this unnatural union (the living body freed from the corpse it bore about with it), those other most certain truths of God's perfections, carried out as they are in His revelation into express declarations, be taken into account, and a large induction formed on the whole, and a beautiful, harmonious system, symmetrical in all its proportions, will spring up at once before the delighted vision.

“This is one specimen of the mode in which error has been created and perpetuated; but the history of theo-

logy presents too much of a similar nature. By neglecting to use the proper method of correcting our facts, on the one hand, when we have attempted it—namely, the vigorous, fearless, yet rigid application to them of *appropriate* ideas; or by scorning facts, on the other hand, and letting theory run riot, as exemplified especially amongst our friends the Germans, whose pantheistic, rationalistic, and idealistic theories bear rather a remoter relation to the eternal facts of Christianity, than did the dreams of the ancient alchemists, or the fables of the old romancers, to the sober and enduring facts of nature; by making human creeds and councils, instead of guides, authorities, instead of steps, bars to further advance; by beating down inquiry, and shutting our eyes to anomalies and contradictions—in all these ways we have, I think, done so much to stunt and distort our theology, that nothing but the divine, living element in it can account for its comparatively satisfactory growth and proportions. But the time is, I trust, approaching when its shackles will be removed, and we shall see it gradually assuming a beauty and a strength which will astonish us."

Elizabeth.—"But, Frederic, the ordinary man and woman cannot study the Scriptures in the manner you propose; for, besides the knowledge of the ancient languages, such powers of thought, such a grasp of mind would be required."

Fred.—"No, my love; you are quite right. It is not a task which can be made over to the ordinary mind. It would be folly to suppose such an one could overtake it. But let there be a general demand for it, and master-minds will spring up to the supply."

Elizabeth.—"But will ordinary minds recognise them when they come?"

Fred.—"How has it been in the other departments of science? Has the true discoverer ever failed to be sooner or later acknowledged? And have not true *discoveries* too, which the common mind might have sought in vain to the end of time itself to make, come to be to that mind matter of undoubted certainty? So will it be with the properly investigated and proved truths of revelation. This, however, is not the work of a day, nor probably of a few individuals. The first step, but it is only the first, is to discover right methods. After that a great deal is necessary—and, above all, the Divine blessing, which in a matter of this kind is not *always* given in answer to prayer. With respect to essential saving truth, the text holds good, 'Seek, and ye shall find;' but with the great mass of theological truth, I do not know that we have greater encouragement, though I think we have as great as with other sciences. It appears to be the Divine method in the elucidation of every branch of truth, that there should be a co-operation and a *succession* of minds. In this limited sense, Merton, I do pay respect to numbers—much more, I think, than do those who think they only have to read the Scriptures with an open mind and heart, and, by the Divine blessing, they shall ascertain the truth on every point. I do not call such men presumptuous—far from it; but I think they expect more than is reasonable. For myself, I expect to go down to my grave retaining, of course I cannot approximately guess how much, but a certain amount of theological error, and failing to see an immensity of theological truth which will be revealed to my successors."

Mr L.—"As regards the race, I think the great secret of advance in truth in all directions is a perfect confidence in the willingness of God to impart it to us, and in the instruments He employs for doing it."

Fred.—"I thank you, Mr Lloyd, for that remark; it is weighty and suggestive."

Mr L.—"Surely the starting point of a true and successful search into revelation, must be a thorough conviction of its infallibility. This will enable us to be fearless in our investigations. We are not afraid that the *facts* of Nature shall anywhere run counter to the innate and irrefragable *ideas* derived from necessary truth; we are not afraid that Nature shall contradict and refute herself, and that her true laws (I do not speak of our applications of them) *here* and *now* shall be abrogated by her laws *there* and *then*. And none of these things need we fear any more from revelation."

Mr M.—"I think your principle is perfectly correct, but it requires to be supplemented by another. We may be fearless, but we must also be docile; fearless when it is our part to interrogate revelation, but docile and silent when it is our part to receive its answers. And that same confidence in revelation which you spoke of will lead to the last result as certainly as the first. And I think we should not only be prepared to find the answers unlike our anticipations, but *expect* it. While the Scriptures doubtless must, when properly understood, tally with all the fundamental principles of our nature, they are not likely to do so with very many of our deductions from these principles; besides, that in lieu of these, they may teach much which the unassisted human intellect never could have discovered. There are many who seem quite to overlook this; who appear to

come to the Bible expecting it to tell nothing more and nothing less than natural religion."

Fred.—"Yes, they forget that every revelation must have its facts, as well as its principles—its data, as well as its conclusions. Nature abounds in things which we must receive as ultimate facts—things which we may admire, or the reverse—but which all the philosophers in the world, though they had had an eternity to think on the subject, never would have predicated. But our very docility should be intelligent, and not stupid. We should deal with the apparent difficulties of revelation as Newton did with those of nature. When from false data he miscalculated the moon's distance from the earth, and made her motions inconsistent with the theory of universal gravity, he did not smother up his consciousness of this difficulty—try and persuade himself that allegiance to, and faith in nature and truth obliged him to set the matter altogether aside, and never revolve in his mind any method of reconciling the apparent contradiction. On the contrary, he kept it as a matter of distinct consciousness in his mind, ready and waiting for any clue that should lead to the solution of the enigma; and at last the clue came. In this case, the philosopher who discovered the difficulty was privileged to remove it. This may not always be the case; but if unable to do so himself, he should hand it over to others to continue the investigation—*hand it over in its true character of an apparent anomaly*, and not try to smuggle it in with clear and reconcileable facts."

Mrs M.—"I think we have quite forgotten Mr Lloyd's theory of reformation."

Fred.—"Yes, indeed. This has been a long digression. What I complain of, Mr Lloyd, in that theory is,

that while the principle is in itself a true and good one, it is not applicable to the present case, not answering to the Scripture terms. To continue the philosophical language we have lately been indulging in, the idea is not *appropriate* to the fact."

Mr L.—"What idea then is so? You would say, that of wrath; but as this is contrary to my fundamental ideas of the character of the Divine Being, I cannot accept it."

Fred.—"No, there is an intermediate idea—that of justice. I quite agree with you that the emotion of wrath, properly speaking, is not to be for one instant ascribed to the Deity. I am sure our friend Merton must be of the same mind."

Mr M.—"Assuredly. It is only a figure of speech, used in conformity to our finiteness of understanding; just as when God is said to have eyes, and hands, and ears."

Fred.—"It represents not a law of His nature, but a rule of His proceedings, anthropomorphously described. Now I perfectly agree with you that throughout all their stages the love of God for His creatures remains unaltered; but for all this, His mode of dealing with them undergoes great changes. Above all, there is the fundamental distinction between favour and wrath.—I think there will be found to be a third condition between the two.—Now, the Correctionist theory of Universalism, as it appears to me, tends to obliterate this distinction. To be simply corrected for our faults is represented, and justly, in Scripture as a mark of God's favour and kindness; and if it be, as it is, undoubtedly true that in this time of probation this sort of discipline is in a measure shared by many who are not God's genuine children

(and indeed it is not likely any human being has died entirely without it), it is that in an inferior sense God shews kindness to all His creatures during this time, and especially to the morally upright. But this period of leniency must, we know, come to an end, and be succeeded by one of wrath. And yet I cannot see that you make any distinction in kind between salutary discipline and the future punishment inflicted on the impenitent. This seems to me as inadmissible in theology as it would be for natural philosophy to represent two entirely distinct sets of phenomena as identical, because both are known to be consistent with some higher law. If you adopt my system of Universalism [*smiling*], I think you will see how both these rules of the Divine action consist with that one grand principle of benevolence, to which, with reason, you so pertinaciously cling."

Elizabeth, who felt for poor Mr Lloyd in having to listen to his own refutation from the lips of a brother Universalist, now addressing him, said—"But whether you do see that or not, Mr Lloyd, it is our common hope in the great and blessed issue that must chiefly unite us. Oh, how does that belief change the whole aspect of life! You almost wonder how you can have borne up without it under the sorrows of humanity."

Frederic, smiling and looking at his wife, said, "She does not refer to her *own* sorrows, Mr Lloyd."

"No; one would not expect that from a bride in her honeymoon. But I suspect that in general the bride at that time not only forgets her own sorrows, but all the sorrows and the joys of the world around."

Mr M.—"Well, I for one should not be very severe with her, if she did. But, unhappily, forgetfulness of the ills of humanity is not confined to the happy bride dur-

ing the brief period of the honey days ; we are all far too callous to griefs that are not our own—we are far too independent of each other.”

Mr L.—“ And yet that is the state in which those who believe in eternal misery must expect the saints to continue during their eternity of bliss, as respects the countless millions of sufferers in hell. At least, I regard that as the most charitable hypothesis.”

Mrs M.—“ But I think the Bible represents them as *rejoicing* and praising God for the destruction of their enemies.”

Fred.—“ Yes, and it is natural and proper they should rejoice in the *destruction* of those who are not only their individual enemies, but those of goodness and truth. But I do not imagine even this feeling can be eternal, or of more than very moderate length, otherwise it would become cowardly. Few things appear to us at any rate, with our present feelings, more cowardly than to continue to glory over a fallen adversary ; while to gloat over his further suffering we justly look on as inhuman. I am sure, therefore, my dear Mrs Merton, your heart would as decidedly force you to reject that horrible idea respecting the saints, as my heart forces me to do so, were you not misled by false interpretations, and mistranslations of Scripture.”

Mrs M.—“ It is a very mysterious subject ! ”

Mr L.—“ There is very much of mystery in every kingdom of God ; but when a mystery is found which contradicts first principles, I always strongly suspect it is of man’s fashioning.”

Mr M.—“ That principle might carry you very far ! ”

Elizabeth.—“ But if it is a right one, why need we fear *how far* it should carry us ? ”

Fred.—"Why, indeed! Commend me to first principles! How safe we are when we adhere to them; how strong and fearless! You know, Merton, the grand thing when we expect an attack from the enemy is to choose a right position. Nothing is safe which we cannot defend in consistency with first principles."

Mr M.—"Perhaps there may be a cant about first principles as well as other things."

Fred.—"I have no doubt there is. Nothing in this world is safe from cant. But how are we to meet cant, and seek to extirpate it? Is it by denying the existence and claims of that true thing of which it is the false representative? Surely, it is rather by exhibiting them in all their fulness and force."

Mr M.—"We must be cautious at any rate in our use of the argument, and not precipitately reject things which may have other evidence to prove them, on the ground of their apparent disagreement with first principles. The existence of evil at all in the universe is a thing which, it seems to me, we should have *à priori* declared impossible. It remains for you to prove, Somers, how the existence of present evil being consistent with the eternal attributes of God, the future continuance of that evil cannot be so."

Fred.—"I have a good deal to say on that head; but I think we should leave it for another time."

Frederic felt as if he had scarcely acted courteously towards Mr Lloyd, in not giving him a larger share in the conversation. It was owing very much to the guilelessness and frankness of his disposition, added to its earnestness, that his superiority of mind had so often its natural influence in giving him the lead in conversation. He never monopolised. He always gave to others the

opportunity of saying the right and true thing (besides listening patiently and good-humouredly to much that was neither); but when that right and true thing presented itself to his own mind first, he came out frankly with it, unrestrained by the fact that he had spoken a good deal already. In fact, he was so intensely occupied with the *things said*, he had little attention to spare for the consideration *who* had said them. Now, however, that the stress of the previous course of argument was over, he had time to feel a strong desire to learn from Mr Lloyd the circumstances connected with his adoption of his present views. This curiosity the good old man was very willing to gratify, as he did by means of the short narrative I shall record in my next chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

MR LLOYD'S NARRATIVE.

"I DON'T know," began Mr Lloyd with a smile, "if you are all aware that in former years I held a situation, which you perhaps will not think a very delightful one, Mrs Somers—I was governor of a jail. Of course, this brought me into contact with some of the worst specimens of humanity. I was not at the beginning of that time a religious man; that is to say, religion was by no means a living principle within me; but I had a very strong sense of its importance as a moral engine, and was decidedly evangelical in my creed. I was, therefore, most zealous in the promotion of all the religious appliances within my reach—religious books, tracts, visiting and services, to the case of the unhappy beings under my charge. There was one man of a highly interesting appearance. He was not handsome in feature, but there was a fine and mysterious blending of sorrow and genius which arrested the eye on his countenance, while his fine moustache and splendid beard, his erect form and majestic carriage, proclaimed him truly *the man*. He had been committed to jail under a charge of burglary, but had always persisted in declaring his innocence; and it was my own private conviction, independent of the nature of the evidence, which had never satisfied me, from the innate and unmistakeable dignity of the man's character,

that he was truthful in this declaration. I always observed this man with peculiar interest, and at the church service generally had him within my view, and occasionally turned to watch his countenance. It very frequently had an abstracted air, but sometimes it conveyed a half-smothered expression of contempt and scorn, especially while the preacher dwelt on the threatenings of the law, which he certainly did more at large, and *con amore*, than on the pleadings of the gospel. Once the chaplain entered on a course of weekly lectures, exhibiting the evil consequences of personal sin and guilt. I remember now the successive heads, which were these : —The evil consequences—1. In impairing the peace of the conscience ; 2. In blunting the sensibilities, clouding the faculties, and shutting out from innocent enjoyment ; 3. In incurring the dislike and distrust of others, in marring the outward prospects ; and his last discourse was to be devoted to the subject of the final doom. The prisoner, whose name was Lennox, had listened in general with marked attention to these lectures, and I expected that this would be perhaps painfully intensified during the last. Instead of this, I observed that he leant his head in a peculiar manner on his hand, and that his cap, which he generally laid aside during the whole service, was pushed over his ears, so as to induce the suspicion that he had resolved not to listen. The preacher was more than usually earnest, even vehement, this day. He described, in the most fearful colours, the doom of the wicked. ‘This doom,’ he said, ‘was not annihilation, as they would fain now believe it, and then doubtless wish it to be. We can imagine them, when plunged in those dismal torments, lifting up their eyes with the piteous entreaty to God, that He would grant

them the boon of destruction. But this prayer He cannot, in consistence with His own eternal justice, grant; and, therefore, as before He cried and they obeyed not, so now, though through a long, long eternity they should continue to put up this petition, will He through that long eternity remain inexorable to it.' I half fancied I observed Lennox wince a little under this; but I may have been mistaken, as he continued in the same attitude to the end of the sermon. In conversation with me next day, the chaplain said, 'He is a strange fellow, that Lennox. I must confess I am beginning to give him up as a bad job. I shall certainly inquire, however, into his peculiar attitude yesterday.' I expressed surprise at this, and said, I thought the pride of the man would scarcely brook such interference, and, in all deference to him, the chaplain, I thought the better way would be to leave the prisoner in this matter to himself. 'Ah, you don't know him,' he said. 'With all his pride, he has a fine supply of candour and common sense. He lets me say whatever I like to him on religious subjects—partly, indeed, because he is not afraid to say what he likes to me. He knows that is my business, and my motives are good. If I shewed the slightest degree of inquisitiveness in other things out of my province, he would resent it.'

"After I knew that the interview had taken place, I returned to my worthy friend the chaplain. 'Well,' he said, 'Lennox did not deny that he purposely refused to listen to that sermon of mine. I will give you some idea of what he said. "I know," he began, "that I am a bad man. Of that *crime* of which I have been charged, and for which I am punished, I am perfectly innocent. But my aspirations are high, and my convic-

tions correct and keen, and yet in thought and fancy I am continually grovelling in the dust. When I think of what I might be and what I am—of my godlike idea and my poor achievement, I feel I am a blot in the universe of God. Yes, Mr Branxton, I confess to you that I think meanly of myself—as meanly quite as you can of me. But one thing I do not—one thing I will keep myself from as long as I can. I do not *hate God*.” I instantly read his meaning. “Poor man!” I exclaimed; “and can you only be kept from hating God by shutting your ears to the declarations of His vengeance against sin?” “Against *sinner*s, you should rather say,” he rejoined. “Vengeance against *sin* would be best shewn by causing it to cease.” Then seeing I was about to reply, he added in an authoritative tone, while his eye flashed fire, “But do not say another word on the subject. I *forbid* you to speak to me on it! My feelings are my own, and I have a RIGHT to guard them.” I stood confounded, and could not add a word. But, poor man, we must pray for him.”

Here Mr Lloyd paused, and Mrs Merton said, “Poor man, indeed! To think that by excluding the announcement of future wrath, he could do away with its reality.” “Do you not sympathise with him, Laura?” said her husband. “I do intensely. But pray go on, Mr Lloyd. Your story is deeply interesting.”

Mr L.—“Well, it happened a few days after this that a card was sent up to me announcing a visit from a titled lady, Lady Emily Trevors, and I soon saw the most beautiful countenance I ever set eyes on. She was a widow; but was still in the prime of lovely womanhood; I thought, about twenty-six. If I was surprised at her apparition, I was still more so when I learnt her mis-

sion. It was that she might be allowed regularly to visit the prisoners in the jail. I started and could not help exclaiming,—‘Your rank and beauty!’ She received my exclamation with the greatest composure. Both voluntary and involuntary compliments were evidently nothing new to her. ‘Are influence and beauty gifts of God?’ she said. ‘I suppose they must be so considered,’ I replied. ‘Then you will allow that they need not stand in the way, but may be used to promote the glory of God?’ ‘That is certainly a high aim,’ I replied, ‘and one that it were well indeed if it were more entertained by those possessing such advantages. May I ask if your ladyship has ever tried this experiment before?’ ‘To a certain extent I have,’ she answered; ‘but sometimes one does not need experiments. You feel you are no more certain of the end than of the means you would use to attain it.’ Seeing I still hesitated, she said with a smile, ‘Shall I tell you?—I think I may—the special circumstance which led to my present application. It was an impressive dream I lately had, which came home to me with a conviction of its truth, that I should be the means of bringing to God one within these walls.’ The thought of Lennox instantly flashed through my mind, my hesitation vanished, and I exclaimed, ‘God forbid, madam, that I should hinder you in what your heart is set on. I shall be delighted to introduce you to your work.’

“You may believe I was not long of taking her to Lennox. Their first *abord* was remarkable. He was evidently awe-struck with her beauty; but she appeared scarcely less struck with him. I should have told you, that while Lady Emily was by no means proud, it was impossible to forget her rank while speaking to her; her

every gesture was dignity and grace. But he, too, was of *Nature's* aristocracy; and this she at once perceived. She was not a woman on whom majesty of intellect and the superiority of sex could be lost. I hope you don't think me impertinent, ladies, in asserting the superior dignity of man."

Elizabeth (smiling).—"I don't. My husband knows it has always been my doctrine."

Mrs M.—"I am not so sure about its being mine. At any rate, my husband is the last person I should inform of it, if it were. However this is *par parenthèse*. Let us return to the beautiful lady. By the by, I am so glad she was beautiful. I delight in beauty, in women at least. I don't care a bit for it in men. Do you, Mrs Somers?"

Elizabeth.—"I used to care mightily little for it. Indeed, I think I almost liked handsome men less than others."

Mrs M.—"Why are you changed now?"

Elizabeth smiled, and glanced at her husband; and then turned her laughing eyes again towards Mrs Merton.

"You have committed a great blunder, Laura," said her husband. "You have been depreciating handsome men in the very face of a man who is eminently handsome."

Mrs M.—"Pray forgive me, Mrs Somers. I certainly owe you an apology. But I think I have a good excuse; for really Mr Somers is so much more and better than a handsome man, I had all but forgotten that he *was* one. But now we have interrupted the story at any rate, I should just like to touch a little on this other subject. I have always been strongly affected by beauty,

in my own sex, at least; and yet I have often had a kind of misgiving whether there was not a latent injustice in it. If we simply delighted in it for itself, as we do in the beauty of a rose or a gem, and admired in it the workmanship of the great Creator, it would be very well. But when we go on to *love* its possessor on account of it, as if it were a moral quality and something intrinsic, and in consequence love those less who are without it—surely that is unjust.”

Elizabeth.—“Oh! how vividly you recall to me one of the deep griefs of my childhood—or rather, it was when I was just emerging from childhood, and in a somewhat morbid state. I think that is an age when individual experiences make peculiarly strong, sometimes indelible impressions on the nature. A book, a chance conversation, to say nothing of a new friend, form eras in one’s life. At that time I happened to meet with a piece of poetry, entitled ‘The Unloved One.’ It was the story of two sisters, one extremely beautiful, the other plain. The former on account of her beauty was universally beloved, the other slighted. But the sad, the really agonising part of the tale to me was, that the *mother* loved the beautiful one the best. She bestowed all her affection on her, and reserved none for her beautiless child. It was true she, too, was vindicated at last. She saved her sister from the flames, and in this way won both her sister’s love and that of her mother. But to think of a child’s requiring to *win* her mother’s love, because she was not beautiful! As I grew older, I felt that there was much that was overdrawn in this story; but the general fact remained, that the beautiless are less loved.”

Mr M.—“I am afraid, my dear Mrs Somers, there

is no remedy. It springs from the magic power which beauty has over us, which we cannot do away with—and perhaps would not if we could.”

Fred.—“ You see, dear love, that it would require not that the beautiful should be more loved, but the beautiful less. You would not desire that, would you?”

Elizabeth (in a low tone).—“ I suppose not. But I know it makes me long and pant for the time when all shall be *equally* loved.”

Fred.—“ All *perfectly* loved, at any rate—all up to their hearts’ desires. You know, dearest wife, that in our perfect state, we shall feel a delight we now cannot conceive, in the love which is bestowed on others as well as on ourselves.

‘ And we shall sit at endless feast,
Enjoying each the other’s good.’ ”

Elizabeth.—“ Yes, I can understand that even now, and constantly feel it. But then we must feel it is *just*. Now, in this case of physical beauty, as Mrs Merton says, there seems something like injustice.”

Mr L.—“ It is rather, perhaps, that our poor, wayward hearts pervert the feeling into injustice; but this they do with the other instinctive principles. Even that most beautiful of all the instinctive affections, a mother’s love, may be, and often is, abused into an unjust disparagement of other claims. Still the world cannot dispense with the mother’s *instinctive* love. We can conceive of a constitution of things solely founded on the principles of moral complacency and benevolence; but that is not the world as our all-wise Creator has fashioned it.”

Fred.—“ What you have said, however, suggests the remedy which Mrs Merton and my wife sought for, so far as the thing itself ought to be remedied. We are

not to seek to uproot the instinctive affections from our nature; but only to keep them in subjection to its nobler principles. And this cannot be while these last are mere rules of conduct: they, too, must become instincts of our higher being. Our hearts are not right—they need to be changed—if they do not feel a great suffusion of delight in *moral* beauty; if this, as well as physical loveliness, does not make its possessor dear to our souls; and if, when the two are brought into competition, the higher beauty is not the dearer. Do you not think, Mrs Merton, that would remedy the injustice you spoke of?"

Mrs M.—"That is the best way, indeed; but, unhappily, there are few who can attain to it. And in the meantime, there is many a loving heart which remains unloved."

Mr L. (with a sigh).—"Too true! But, dear madam, heaven will make amends for all. All that will be set right in those bright regions above; and the unloved will find that in this, as in other respects, they could not have changed their lot in this life one hair's-breadth for the better. Well, I will go on with my story. I said that the prisoner and his fair visitor were mutually struck. In fact, there was almost as much deference in her manner towards him, as in his towards her. She took up a copy of 'Keble's Christian Year,' which was lying on the table near him, and asked him if it was a favourite with him? He said it was, and asked her if she would do him the favour to read him one of the pieces which he pointed out, beginning, 'And wilt Thou hear the fever'd heart?' I left her reading it to him. Some time after this, the chaplain came to me one day and said, 'This is a pretty business! I find

that the fair saint who visits our wards is terribly unsound in her views, and more than this, she has been indoctrinating the men with her heterodoxy—one man at least, Lennox.’ I said there surely was some mistake. ‘Not at all,’ he said; ‘but I must tell you she warned me of this, which was honourable in her. But I had no idea, when she spoke of holding some peculiarities of opinion, she could mean anything like Universalism. It is this she has been preaching to Lennox: the worst thing possible to proclaim to an unrepentant sinner. It will undo all the little good I have ever done him.’ I could not help remarking on this that I didn’t see that the threats of the law had done him any good whatever. I expressed my surprise, however, at her speaking of this peculiar doctrine under such circumstances. I was restless till I had spoken to her ladyship on the subject. ‘I am not about, madam,’ I said, ‘to attack your own personal belief, which, as entertained in so pure a breast, may, I doubt not, be harmless, but I cannot but express a misgiving as to the advisability of conveying it to those to whom it may be less innocent.’ She replied, ‘The first thing to determine, Mr Lloyd, is whether the doctrine is in the Bible or not. The Bible, I think you will agree with me, was intended for man *as man*, and no individual has a right to keep any part of its truths to himself.’ This led to a short, but to me deeply interesting conversation on the subject, when I was very much struck with several things which fell from her lips; with one remark in particular. She said that the ordinary view which represented Satan as retaining the majority of the human race in everlasting bondage to sin and suffering, was only consistent with that most erroneous doctrine of the

Manichees (itself probably a perversion of Zoroaster's), which maintained the independent existence of two supreme deities—the one a benevolent, the other a malignant being. It ended by Lady Emily's handing me an admirable work on Universalism, by an American writer, Elhanan Winchester. This, after much study on my part, and, I may add, sincere prayer for the Divine guidance, was the means of my complete adoption of the view."

Elizabeth.—"How deeply interesting all you have told us!"

Mr M.—"Exceedingly! And what more of Lennox?"

Mr L.—"Oh, he drank in Universalism as a thirsty man drinks water; and his whole being seemed renovated by it. I can compare the change to nothing so well as the transition in a tropical clime from the gloom of winter to the glory of summer. His moral and intellectual powers, both of a sublime order, now were brought into harmony with each other and the universe, and a higher life still arose. How did I mourn that that noble presence and eloquent tongue should be caged and clogged in a prison! But I must tell you the end of his story. The time came for him to be liberated. By this time our first chaplain had died, and another had quite lately succeeded him. Experience had taught him to distrust prison conversions, and he spoke to Lennox kindly, but as to a still unregenerate man, and warned him solemnly against associating again with evil companions. The man smiled, not scornfully as it would once have been, but with a genial, half-amused smile. 'It has never been my practice,' he said, 'to keep company with the evil and the base. But

now, with all respect, sir, to your advice, I shall feel compelled to consort much with them, because I believe I have a message to convey, which is good for all, but especially needed by them.' Then, kindling with his subject, he said, 'My experience in this jail has taught me much of the human heart, and if there is one thing it has taught me more profoundly than another, it is the baneful effect on the already depraved heart, of religious doctrines which place the character of the Supreme Ruler in an unfavourable and unjust light. People have discovered much and spoken well of the power of gentleness from man to man. What a mighty engine of good, if properly applied, would be a right exhibition of the *gentleness* of God, backed, as in Him it is, by the perfection of holiness and the perfection of power!' The chaplain appeared much struck, and silently withdrew. When Lennox left us, I obtained a promise from him that he would keep up a correspondence with me, as we were united by peculiar bonds of affection and now of opinion. I have received some highly interesting letters from him, which shew that he has carried out his plan of quietly proclaiming Universalism with untiring zeal and decided success, and apparently saved some who were on the verge of infidelity from falling into that abyss."

Mr M.—"Of course, I do not know these other instances. Lennox was evidently no ordinary man, and ordinary rules must not be applied to him; but, even granting the truth of the doctrine, I should look on it as one very liable to be abused by the depraved consciences of common sinners. Foster seems to have been of this opinion. You know he never preached Universalism, though he held it; and he kept it back for the very

reason I have mentioned. It is very well to say that all truth is safe. If we could obtain it in its entirety, it might be so; but as a fact, owing to the limitation of our faculties and of our knowledge, truth can very frequently only take shape in our minds as half truth, which, as Carlyle so emphatically teaches, is often the most misleading of falsehoods. Therefore, it seems to me, if we know that that amount of fresh intellectual light which we could cause to enter a certain mind would only prove to it, from its subjective state, an *ignis fatuus*, leading it away from what is morally and practically right, and this last *is* truth in another form, we are bound to withhold that light, leaving the mind in the meantime to the dim, dull, but not misleading environment of its natural atmosphere."

Fred.—"Your *principle* is perfectly correct. It is from violating it that Göthe and his school appear to me to have egregiously erred even in point of intellectual truth. In their great desire for an all-sided acquaintance with human life and human nature, they forget or ignore the fact that, owing to the corruption of the natural heart, there is great danger that in an intimacy with the truth of particular, partial facts—and all immorality is partial, because not in harmony with universal truth—they let go the greater, fuller truth of eternal *principle*."

Mr M.—"It is extremely difficult to continue in close relations with both evil and good, though some minds seem able to accomplish it. Either their intellect is so strong, and their imagination so penetrating and clear, that they can have and maintain an intellectual perception of good, while, as regards the sentient part of their nature, revelling in evil; or their moral principle is so firm and fine, that it can continue undeflected, and their

appreciation of good uninjured, though brought by their external relations into close familiarity with evil. But in general it is as you say, even as respects the intellect, a dangerous experiment."

Fred.—"And I think we may see in Göthe's own writings that in a great measure it failed in his case. He had a transcendent intellect, and in what relates to the purely intellectual or the simply instinctive part of man, as well as the objective facts of nature, he shewed wonderful insight and keen observation; but when we come to the region of *morals*, his grasp and penetration appear extremely imperfect. Partly from natural moral deficiency, and also, in great part, I should imagine, from the diseased condition induced by too habitual lingering in a tainted atmosphere, he seems to have been entirely incapable of appreciating the subtleties and the elevations of moral beauty. And thus, if possibly Schiller's portraits are too uniformly idealised, Göthe's portraits are too uniformly, in a moral sense, at best *mediocre*, to constitute him, in an entire sense, a truthful delineator."

Mrs M.—"How do you apply these remarks to the subject we were discussing?"

Fred.—"Your husband thinks that even though the doctrine of Universalism should be true, it may be a dangerous one to promulgate."

Mrs M.—"Surely, dear William, that is just the Popish doctrine. If the thing is in the Word of God, it must be intended to be known and must be safe."

Mr M.—"Well, you may be right; but I feel somehow as if I should scarcely like to go and tell a hardened criminal, 'It would be well for you to repent now, certainly: in fact, it is your bounden duty to do so; but I

cannot conceal from you the fact that whether you repent or not, all will be well with you in the end.' However, I am sure Frederic has a great deal to say in reply to my objection, and I think we should postpone the consideration of this point till to-morrow evening. Mr Lloyd, you are free, I hope, and will join us?"

Mr L.—"With the greatest pleasure"

CHAPTER VIII.

SOPHIA MILWOOD—IS OMNISM A CARNAL AND
LICENTIOUS DOCTRINE?

"How delightful!" exclaimed Mrs Merton, when, after steeping the tea for breakfast on the following morning, she opened and read a letter which the post had brought. "Sophia Milwood is actually here, paying a visit to her cousin! She arrived yesterday morning. I must call and ask her to drink tea with us and join our *conversazione* this evening. She will make a charming addition to our party."

"If we are to continue our regular *argumentation*," said her husband, "I don't expect Sophia will say a word; but she will be an intelligent listener, at any rate."

"Perhaps the first evening of her coming to you she would think it a little strange our continuing it," said Elizabeth.

"Oh, no!" replied Mrs Merton. "That is to be paramount to everything else just now. If people won't fall in with it, we do not wish to invite them. Besides, I am sure nothing would delight Miss Milwood more than our going on with our discussion. She has excellent reasoning powers, and will soon become sufficient mistress of the argument to follow it. But all truth travels at once in her nature from the reason to the feel-

ings, so that she seldom ventures to *speak* much of what she thinks."

At this moment a note was handed in from Mr Lloyd, expressing his great regret that, owing to his brother's having, during his absence the evening before, invited some friends expressly to meet him, he must forego the pleasure of seeing them that evening. 'Would it be too bold in him to request the postponement of that part of the discussion till the following evening, when he would be at liberty to join them?'

This was of course agreed on; and it was resolved that if Miss Milwood could come, there should be no regular discussion on the subject of future punishment. When the ladies were alone, Mrs Merton said, "I must tell you something of Sophia Milwood. She is an orphan, and resides with a sister many years older than herself, and like her, unmarried. I am afraid she is not very happy; her sister is so uncongenial, and *she* is so enthusiastic and sensitive. We strongly suspect, however, that she has, for reasons best known to herself, refused several sufficiently eligible offers of marriage. She devotes herself very much to works of usefulness, but I must confess I don't think her heart is satisfied."

"Is she of a melancholy temperament?"

"Not naturally, I think. But there is a certain earnestness of purpose about her—a tendency to concentration of affection which would have fitted her peculiarly, I should have thought, to live for some grand and cherished object in life. But I have come to entertain very different notions on that subject from those I once had. I am inclined to think now that our tendencies in certain directions being particularly strong, is a reason

sometimes, in order to procure that discipline of self-denial which God sees to be good for us, not that they should be satisfied, but that they should be thwarted. I have felt this at times markedly in my own case."

"Have you indeed?" said Elizabeth. "I used to feel it strongly, too, at one time. And there are some lives to which, even after their close, one can give no other interpretation. But it is a very sad one: I trust it is not to be your friend's."

Mrs Merton made a long call on Miss Milwood, and persuaded her to come back with her and spend the day with them.

Sophia Milwood seemed at once to take a fancy to Elizabeth. "What a sweet creature your friend is!" she said to Mrs Merton, when they went up to dress for dinner. "So gentle and pleasing!" "She is an interesting creature!" said Elizabeth to her husband, "but sad, too. What a pensive meaning lies in her large black eyes! I think, Frederic, she is not at all unlike you, but her expression is different."

After their guest's departure at night, Elizabeth said, "Don't you think Miss Milwood is very like Frederic. It strikes me more and more." "Well, really, I think she is," exclaimed Mrs Merton. "How very singular!" and she looked down and blushed. "Why should it be so very singular?" asked Frederic, whose curiosity had been excited by Mrs Merton's blush. She laughed, and colouring yet deeper, said, "You must know that, before you married, William and I had designs on you for this very Sophia Milwood. We thought she would be just the wife for you, only ——." She stopped with a look of sudden embarrassment. "You had better finish your sentence, my dear, *tout bonnement*," said Mr Merton.

"There is no necessity to be anything but frank with our friends here, and they deserve it from us." "Well," continued she, "judging you by some others I had known, I thought that, whenever you married, you would perhaps prefer a very young wife. But, I am sure you made the very best choice possible." "I shall correct your expression simply by saying, that God made the best choice for me," said Frederic. "But yours was not bad either. I feel honoured by it." Elizabeth's mind had recurred to her conversation with Mrs Merton that morning, and dwelt sadly on Sophia's lonely lot; and now, as the thought suddenly struck her, 'If I had not married him, perhaps *she* might have done so,' her eyes half-filled with tears, and she bent them on her work to conceal her emotion. 'I have perhaps deprived her of a great happiness. How can I make up to her for it? I will pray that she may become an Omnist.' Her husband observed Elizabeth's sudden pensiveness, and thought, 'Surely my Elizabeth does not think I should have preferred another to herself!' When they were alone he asked her the meaning of her sadness. "I was thinking of various things Mrs Merton told me of her this morning," she replied, "and how lonely she is. She has no tender husband like me, though, perhaps, in some respects she needed one more." "And I suppose you wish she had your husband instead of yourself!" "I am afraid I could hardly bring myself to that. But it makes me more than ever long to see her an Omnist. Oh! Frederic, pray with me that she may become one." Elizabeth slept but little that night, thinking of her new acquaintance. Next morning she said to Mrs Merton, "Do you think Miss Milwood would like to take a walk with me while you are engaged

with the children?" "I am sure she would. I shall write her a note by William, who passes close by. Shall I say you will call, and if she is disengaged, take a walk with her?" "If you please. That is just what I should like."

Miss Milwood and Elizabeth had a walk and much interesting conversation together, chiefly on the subject of future punishment, but ere the close, something dropt from Sophia which set her companion a-dreaming. It was this: that Miss Milwood had serious thoughts of devoting herself to literature. How delightful, thought Elizabeth, if we can have this fine mind devoted to the advocacy of Omnism! But then she sighed as she thought of Miss Milwood's sensitive nature, and all the trials which literature would bring upon her. "Are you prepared," she said, turning to her with a gentle smile, "for the disappointments and acute griefs which your new career will bring upon you?" "I don't feel very apprehensive on that score," replied the other with a bright smile. "It is the sympathy and approbation of those I *love* that alone I have ever cared for, and of that I should be secure." "I would not have you reckon too confidently even on that," said Elizabeth. "People love us for such very different reasons in this life, and in some cases it is rather for what we *seem* than for what we are." "But I think I always seem just what I am." "I can scarcely imagine that possible. I think, though we should not wish to appear in the least different from what we are, by a kind of necessity—oh it is a blessed thing to be a whole being to any one!—we shew ourselves to each of our fellow-mortals under a one-sided aspect. This sometimes clashes, but sometimes it harmonises with the others' sentiments. He fills up the

outline out of his own conceptions; and it is only later, when our true self is revealed to him under its other aspects, and we find that he shrinks from us perhaps as from something monstrous, that we learn how much he had all the while misunderstood us."

"Strange!" exclaimed Sophia. "But I do not wish to keep any affection that would not stand such a test."

"Fond heart!" said Elizabeth to herself. "She knows not what she would relinquish." "At least," continued Sophia, after a pause, "there would remain to me the beloved world of the unknown. No unkindness, no misapprehension from them, nothing but perfect sympathy and perfect repose."

"Dear Miss Milwood, I would not damp your enthusiasm; on the contrary, I delight in the thought of seeing you an authoress; but you must excuse me if this conversation makes me rather sad, for it reminds me of a dear friend whom I love the more because I loved her too late. Her case corroborates what I have been saying. She was one of those gentle, unobtrusive beings, whose depth of feeling often passes for shallowness. I have to confess that, though in a measure endeared to me, especially by her affection for myself, still she appeared, while she lived, uninteresting and insignificant. It was only after she was removed by death, that I knew the treasures of her nature. It was strange that I had never even learnt the fact of her having, some years before, published a small volume of poems. These, when I read them, appeared to me truly exquisite; they endeared her to my inmost heart; and yet, in the circle of her own friends at the time, they produced a really painful impression. They could not understand that one who appeared so retired and even demure, should write

so much and so feelingly of love. They criticised her unmercifully, and sentiments which were so elevated and so pure, that I doubt not she received for them the sympathy of her guardian angel, were treated by these, not intentionally unkind, but unsympathising, judges as if they were something dreadful. Oh the thought fills me with sorrow! But it is all past now. She is gone to the *Friend* who makes no mistakes."

Sophia became thoughtful. "Well, dear Mrs Somers, it is perhaps best for us that it is not possible to follow *any* marked course in life which shall not bring on us the disapproval, as well as the approval, of our fellow-men, otherwise we might live too much for that approval; and this, after all, would be a low aim. If I write, as I hope to do, I desire to do it with a constant reference to God. I desire to be first His listener, and then, as far as I may, His spokeswoman." As she said this, they found they had reached Mr Merton's door, and they parted till the evening.

"We are to defend our Universalism from a very serious charge to-day, Mr Lloyd," said Frederic—"that of being a carnal and licentious doctrine."

"To prove that against it would certainly be to sap its very foundations," replied Mr Lloyd; "for its strongest plea is its greater consistency with the character of God, and, consequently, with true morality, than the common view."

Mr M.—"I think you are somewhat misapprehending the drift of the charge. In one sense all truth is moral, because all actuality springs from a moral Deity, and is to be finally subservient to a moral end. But, from the consideration we touched on before, all truth is not equally moral in its direct results as it is *taken up* by

man. It is in the nature of man to theorise. All truth being harmonious, it is clear that truth, so far as it is of the nature of theory at all, is true theory; but just as round stones may be made use of to form a square building, so may true propositions subserve a false theory. Then, while it has been rightly said that all practice involves theory; so, I think, in a certain sense it is also true that all false theory tends to a wrong practice."

Fred.—"Yet we must not charge the bad result on the true proposition, but on the false theory which is constructed out of it."

Mr M.—"Yes; but if from some inevitable laws the statement of the true proposition will, in a vast majority of cases, lead to the construction of the false theory, are we not bound to withhold the proposition?"

Fred.—"Or else to unite with it those other true propositions which are needed to demolish and to supersede the false theory."

Mr M.—"I don't see in this case how that is possible. It must always be less dreadful to incur a temporary penalty by the commission of sin than an eternal one."

Fred.—"Yes, abstractly considered, it is less dreadful; but if the threat of a temporary penalty is theoretically sufficient, and practically more operative, then the actual result will be reversed. This, you are aware, has been found to be the case in the matter of criminal jurisdiction. When sheep-stealing, for instance, was a capital crime, it was actually more common than at present. People thought, The punishment is so disproportioned to the transgression, the man I have robbed will not have the heart to accuse me; or, if I am accused, I shall not be condemned—the witnesses, the jury, or the judge will,

some of them, get me off. Did your observation, Mr Lloyd, coincide with this?"

Mr L.—"Entirely. My conclusions were decidedly in favour of lenity along with *certainly*. There either is in the other case the presumption you describe, which, of course, leads to recklessness, or there is a kind of desperate defiance of a law felt to be unjust, with a perfectly similar result."

Mr M.—"I must confess, too, though it makes against my argument, that there is much that is analogous in the case of belief in future punishment, or rather non-belief. There are many even great sinners who imagine, whether justly or not, that an eternity of misery is a punishment so disproportionate to the sins of one mortal life, that they come either to disbelieve the doctrine altogether, or at least to persuade themselves that *they*, with so much to extenuate, shall certainly escape; and others are undoubtedly reckless from the very spirit of defiance. Still, nothing of all this is any proof that the doctrine is not true."

Fred.—"No; but our present discussion, you remember, relates to the moral bearing of Universalism, on the supposition of its being the truth. And it is certainly relevant to this investigation to consider what are the moral results of the opposite doctrine. Now, that security you have mentioned, founded on a careless reliance on the mercy of God in the individual's own case, which is much more likely to arise when the only alternatives are *eternal* punishment and pardon, besides keeping the sinner from the true ground of salvation, clearly tends indirectly to that extenuation of the evil of sin which has been charged on Universalism. The respectable and harmless member of society, believing that

future punishment is reserved for the openly wicked, comes to think that *his* faults are of a very venial nature; whereas what I consider the true doctrine, of punishment proportioned to transgression, while it prevents a false and hurtful obliteration of all distinctions in guilt, prevents also a light estimate of sin in any shape or degree."

Mr L.—"Another great evil is the result in many minds which, revolting from the doctrine of eternal punishment, as inconsistent with the Divine perfections, reject entirely a revelation which they suppose to contain it. It is well known that this doctrine is one of the favourite and most effective arguments used by infidels against the Bible."

Mr M.—"There are undeniable facts, however, on the other side, which must not be forgotten. That many sinners have actually believed, do at this hour believe in eternal misery, and are thereby deterred from sin, and that not a few convinced sinners have, in the most emphatic manner, expressed their sense of the justice of the sentence at the very moment that they believed it impending over them."

Fred.—"In both these things I believe we may find analogies in the matter of human punishment. That unexpiated and unforsaken sin shall be chastised one day, if not in this world, in the next, is a most necessary and salutary teaching; and when really believed, as I quite agree with you it often is even by the unconverted sinner, it can scarcely fail to be a useful check. Perhaps, in such cases, when there is no rebellion of heart against the infliction as excessive, the *practical* effect of the doctrine may be better than harmless; but I myself, looking on it as both untrue and unjust, cannot but expect it to be felt, and see that it often *is* felt by others

to be so too; and thus its teaching, independent altogether of its destitution of truth, highly injurious. You must also, my dear Merton, have heard of cases where the conscience of a delinquent against human authority—such as that of a parent—being awakened, his sense of his own sin has become so strong, and his self-reproach, in consequence, so vehement, as to overcome all resentment on account of his punishment, even though that punishment appears to the self-possessed spectator unjust and cruel.”

Mrs M.—“President Edwards, in his ‘History of Revivals in America,’ mentions the case of some men who had such an intense feeling of the justice of God in the eternal punishment of sinners, that they declared, if they were condemned, they felt they should take part with God against themselves, and were even willing to be lost eternally. Do you think those men were really sincere?”

Mr M.—“Perfectly so.”

Fred.—“Yes, I have no doubt they were sincere; but still I would not take their judgment as any criterion of the justice of the sentence.”

Mr L.—“The thing may be accounted for, I imagine, in this way. When a conscience, that long had slept secure, has been aroused by the influence of the Holy Ghost to see its guilt, this new sense often comes over it with overwhelming force, and if that authority which before the man had slighted (if he had not deliberately run counter to it), but which now he bows to with reverence, seem to him to declare an eternity of woe to be the desert of his sin, he unquestioningly assents to the justice of the sentence, but still he is far from realising the full force of that which he allows. All that he has

realised is a good, an indefinite infliction. The finite mind cannot seize the idea of infinite duration."

Mrs M.—"How can it then feel it to be unjust?"

Mr L.—"Because it may feel it to be more than is just."

Mrs M.—"But do you think any fallible mind and conscience can be trusted to determine the exact amount of suffering due to even the smallest amount of sin, as it appears to the searching, pure eye of God?"

Fred.—"This may be impossible, but still, I think, if you examine into the nature of justice, you will see that it can only prefer a definite, and therefore a finite claim. And thus the sentiment of justice in the natural heart, while it arrays itself on the side of a limited, sets itself against an unlimited infliction of wrath."

Elizabeth (to *Mrs Merton*).—"I remember Jonathan Edwards observes in reference to those persons whom you alluded to, that they could have no clear idea of eternal misery. He remarks, too, as in part accounting for their acquiescence in their own condemnation, that they judged salvation too good for them; they could scarcely believe that such a rich blessing could be granted to offenders like them in consistence with God's holiness. So that I should say with *Mr Lloyd*, it was not that they deemed the eternity of the wrath just, but that they knew of no alternatives but unending blessedness and unending woe, and as they felt they were utterly undeserving of the one, they imagined themselves completely deserving of the other."

Mr Lloyd.—"I am glad that your memory has furnished my theory with some support from fact. I fully went along with you, *Mr Somers*, when you spoke of temporary punishment as being theoretically sufficient

as well as likely to be practically more operative. Eternists are apt to look on every infliction, short of a boundless one, as light and trifling; but it is not at all necessary so to suppose it. However ambiguous in themselves considered the terms employed in Scripture to describe the duration, there can be no mistake as to the *severity* of the doom awaiting the unforgiven; and if we add to the amount of suffering ages perhaps of banishment from the great fountain of good, we have a lot which none but the grossest infatuation could lead a man realisingly to brave. That he does practically brave and despise it, arises partly from unbelief, partly from forgetfulness and carelessness, and most of all from that blindness which passion and perversion bring down too much upon us all."

Mr M.—"Yes. These will for the most part harden a man against all threats of future punishment, whatever its nature."

Fred.—"That is true, and sin and Satan are too strong for anything but the grace of God; but there are certain, moral appliances, which better than others are fitted to repress evil and lead to good. Now, perhaps it could not but be that Eternism, if believed, must do more than Universalism to deter from crime, if fear was the only principle to be acted on; but while this, being one of the most powerful principles of human nature, is not to be ignored in the Divine, in social, or even in domestic government, and those who would set it aside entirely, in my opinion, greatly err, and seem practically to assert that they could deal better with human nature than its Author does: on the other hand, to carry it such a length as to violate other and higher principles, is a mode of proceeding which I can only characterise as *immoral*."

Mr L.—"I quite agree with you, Mr Somers, that natural fear, like every other ultimate principle in our nature, must have its special place and function; but it is one which, perhaps, in a peculiar manner, needs to be regulated in its amount and direction. It is the ballast of the soul, preserving it from undue expectation either from the future or from other beings, which would thus, but for its influence, become presumption. All experience shews, that as contrasted with hope, for instance, fear was never intended to rule over man's life, for when it is dominant, his nature becomes dwarfed and deformed. Fear makes him shrink into himself, paralyses his intellect, and benumbs his soul, whereas the genial influence of hope is to exalt and expand all his faculties. A man to whom the future looks full of fear will blindly hug the paltry present, which he deems his all; while he to whom the future seems bright with hope will fix his eye upon it, and his emancipation from the dominion of the present will have already begun. Still more disastrous is the influence of fear when it overrules love, and it is with such a case as this that we now have to do. A certain fear of God, a filial fear which checks familiarity and reminds the soul of the grandeur and perfections of the Being who loves it and whom it is called on to love, and which sides with the higher parts of the nature when opposed by the lower, is salutary in the extreme. But all is changed when fear takes the form of dislike; and this it will naturally do in the case of the man to whom God appears as the too severe, or as the simple punisher of sin."

Elizabeth.—"Fear of punishment appears also to be at best purely negative in its effects. Though it should perfectly execute its commission, it would simply give

us an inoffensive, apathetic, and unintelligent being. For that man to be virtuous, active, and intelligent, other and higher influences must be brought to bear upon him. I think you, Frederic, and Mr Lloyd, have both said much to prove that Universalism is not a licentious doctrine, and have even in a measure [smiling] thrown it back on the opposite doctrine; but you have still to consider another form of the charge of carnality. There are many who use the term *carnal* not to mean what springs from an abuse of the natural powers, as it ought to mean if used as a term of reproach, but as signifying what belongs to the natural, moral powers in any way, and which the unrenewed man possesses in common with the renewed. I don't know what such reasoners can make of natural religion."

Mr M.—"I quite agree with you, Mrs Somers. Man's sinfulness springs from the want or excess or perversion of certain principles contained within his own nature. He possesses in himself, in his own natural conscience, the standard whereby he is to be judged, and he is perfectly right, in fact he is bound to refer to that standard, all *soi disant* truth, which presents itself to him."

Sophia Milwood (now speaking for the first time).—"What is meant, then, by a doctrine being built upon a carnal mode of reasoning as opposed to a spiritual one?"

Mr M.—"Well, I think there are only two legitimate applications of the term carnal; first, to such a case as Mrs Somers referred to, where the lower principles of human nature are appealed to, to the exclusion or at least the subordination of the higher; or secondly, to one which you have in your mind where the ordinary laws of human nature are reasoned on, to the ignoring of

those spiritual laws whose sphere transcends, while it does not contradict the other. I think our friends have done very much to clear the doctrine of limited punishment (Universalism, by the by, is something more) from the first charge, which we may term that of licentiousness; there still remains that of carnality as opposed to spirituality."

S. M.—"But is it right, when you are treating of Universalism, to consider it only as threatening limited punishment, and not as teaching the *certainly* of final happiness? It is this last (addressing Elizabeth) which, I must say, I should be inclined to consider dangerous."

Mr M.—"Yes; you see, Mrs Somers, the analogy of human punishment fails here. It would be to tell the criminal, Commit that wicked deed, and not only shall you be consigned only for a certain limited time to prison afterwards, but that time over, you are certain of being received into favour, and being crowned with happiness."

Elizabeth.—"But what sort of happiness? You must think of that. A happiness so pure, so exalted, so free from all lowness, contractedness, selfishness of aim, that to fall in love with it with one's whole soul, would be the best possible cure for the present delight in sin."

Fred.—"Is it not so with the child of God? How much do we read in Scripture, how much have we felt in our own hearts of the purifying effect of a heavenly hope!"

Mr M.—"I am afraid, however, most men would simply think of it as a state of happiness, without analysing what the happiness consisted in."

Fred.—"Such men should not be styled Universalists. The hope of Universalism does not consist only in final

bliss, but in union and likeness to God; and this hope is itself founded on a belief in the holiness and love of God. It would be difficult, I think, to find in all this any encouragement to rebellion, and delight in sense and sin."

Mr L.—"When Lennox had become imbued with Universalism, he gave vent in part to his ardent feelings in composing discourses, which in fancy he addressed to his fellow-prisoners. In one of them, of which he afterwards gave me a copy, occurs a passage where he imagines himself, when first this glorious hope gleamed in his heart, exclaiming, 'Shall I continue to offend against such a God as this, obliging Him, so to speak, to use harsh measures towards me, by persisting in sins I shall one day so perfectly hate? Shall I go on to grieve that blessed Spirit I shall one day so entirely love? Nay, rather, let me come at once and seek to have that stubborn will subdued, which Divine sovereignty and love *will* assuredly one day bring into subjection. That is the freedom to which I am destined; why not hasten to taste it at once?'"

S. M.—"Doubtless his own heart spoke there!"

Mr. L.—"In another place, he says, 'Emerson speaks of the "inevitable morning." I know not what fitter method we could find to raise to higher aims him who has fallen prostrate to the earth, and wrapped in the darkness of misery and guilt, is sunk *within* also in heart and hope, than to direct his eyes to the encompassing heaven, with the assurance, that thence *will* dawn upon him the inevitable morning of love and holy joy.'"

"Inevitable morning!" exclaimed Sophia, in a low tone, her eyes filling with tears and falling to the ground.

"That is a morning," said Elizabeth, "which Emerson's soul has not yet, alas! attempted to conceive."

"But it *will* visit him notwithstanding," rejoined her husband with a smile, which she answered by another.

Fred.—"Well, but that doctrine of carnality—it seems we have not yet disposed of it. Will you tell me again exactly, Miss Milwood, how you understand it as applied to Universalism?"

S. M.—"I should understand it as being agreeable to the natural and not to the renewed mind."

Mr M.—"Or, perhaps, as built on human reasoning, and not on scriptural grounds."

Fred.—"It is probably sometimes used in one sense, sometimes in the other. Will you allow that *because* the doctrine is more agreeable to human nature than the rival one, it is not therefore the less agreeable to the spiritual mind? because it recommends itself to human reason it is not *therefore* unscriptural?"

Mr M. and S. M. (at once)—"Certainly."

Fred.—"These are important concessions: I know not if they would be usually granted if asked, but I know that they are generally in the controversy tacitly refused. Because there are certain things in the gospel scheme which are repugnant to human pride, certain data of revelation which transcend human reason, therefore it is supposed by many that the natural conscience and reason are rather *ignes fatui*, whose light is to be dreaded, than beacons, whose directions are to be respected. Now, William, you rightly said that revelation, while it transcends, never contradicts the light of nature, and therefore it seems to me that in a case like the present, where there is confessedly some degree of reconditeness in the meaning of Scripture, it is highly

important to see what light the elementary revelation casts upon the higher one. That reason and conscience do not teach us certain truths, supposed to be contained in a written revelation, is no sufficient argument against their genuineness ; but that they should clearly teach something *else*, is an objection which assuredly ought to be regarded."

Elizabeth.—"I had almost forgotten your excellent paper, Frederic, on this subject. I think you could not do better than read it to us."

Mrs M.—"Oh, do read it to us, Mr Somers!"

Mr M.—"By all means, let us have it at once, if you have it with you."

Fred.—"Yes, I have it up stairs, but it is not at all in a perfect state."

Elizabeth.—"Oh, it is quite perfect enough! You must go and fetch it."

Frederic rose, and bowing, with a smile to his wife, disappeared. While Mr and Mrs Merton and Mr Lloyd fell into a little discourse on other topics, Sophia Milwood turned to Elizabeth and said, "How deeply interesting I find this discussion! But it surely is too good to be true."

Elizabeth (smiling) — "That is a very natural feeling, I think, with regard to the things of this life; because very often God cannot shew Himself to us here as He is; but in the end we cannot but believe He will be able to shew Himself so to every one of His creatures. And then when we think of His power, His wisdom, and His love, can anything be too good for us to expect from Him?"

S. M.—"Perhaps not. But this is, indeed, a new view of existence."

CHAPTER IX.

NATURE AND REVELATION—JUSTICE AND LOVE COMPARED—MUST HARMONISE—IS SIN INFINITE?—DIVINE JUSTICE—POWER—EVIL PRODUCTIVE OF GOOD—IMPECCABILITY.

“BEFORE reading my paper,” said Frederic, “I should tell you that Charles Rivers informed us that his unknown guide was said to have adopted, in lieu of the term ‘Universalism,’ that of ‘Omnism,’ from the Latin, *omnes*, all. Elizabeth, on hearing this, was very anxious we too should adopt this term, out of deference to him. On this account, and for two other reasons—its being a shorter word, and the doctrine being thus less likely to be confounded with other forms of Universalism, especially that which denies all future punishment—I very generally employ it.”

MR SOMERS' PAPER.

There can scarcely, in theology, be a mistake greater in itself or more dangerous in its tendency, than that which would set in opposition the light of nature and the light of revelation. They are, in reality, most harmonious and mutually corroborative. Blindness to this great truth has been a fruitful source of misinterpreta-

tion with respect to both one and the other testimony. It is this alone, for instance, which can account for the not infrequent utterance from the pulpit, by thinking men, of sentiments such as these :—" If Christianity were a religion altogether of mercy ; if it represented God as thinking lightly of sin, and rather pitying the *weaknesses* than condemning the *faults* of His creatures ; if there was only a promised heaven and not a threatened hell ; if repentance and holiness were not so insisted on ; if God's purity and justice were not so prominently set forth, the unrenewed heart would willingly receive it." Remarks these which plainly indicate forgetfulness of the fact, that there are in human nature other principles than fear and a desire for personal indulgence as respects self, and a weak and morbid benevolence as respects others.

The prospect of punishment is, of course, never agreeable ; but there is a principle of justice within man which *might* even, in certain cases, lead him to honour the reasonableness of the law that condemned him to hell, if, by being known to be of limited duration, that punishment were felt to be reasonable and just. At all events, there is no reason to think that the sanctions of the Divine law, if rightly understood, would, as generally and not *personally* applied, commend themselves less to the consciences of men than do righteous human sanctions.

It is true, that while that rainbow light of multiform natural conscience was as it originally sprang from God most perfectly adjusted, as it exists in any individual man or set of men it is often distorted, and thus one principle may preponderate to the detriment of others. Hence, there have doubtless been systems of doctrine which, in exalting one quality, that of benevolence, have

more or less overlooked the claims of others equally excellent.

Be it understood, however, that benevolence is not the only natural propension which the human element in religion is liable to flatter. There is the principle of destructiveness, which in its integrity appears to adumbrate the opposition of the Divine nature to all evil, and which, properly directed, is in the human being a noble ally to justice. The various heathen religions shew how strongly and how closely it may ally itself with the religious element, and how much in this combination it may be perverted. We see, also, that Mohammed, who will be allowed by all to have studied human nature well, and to have been skilled in dealing with it, while, for the more cultivated and exalted spirits, he incorporated into his system maxims the most refined and elevated, sought the adherence of grosser minds, not only by the promise of a sensual paradise for his own followers, but by the threat of a hell of everlasting torments for the rest of mankind. Such an example should set us on the inquiry whether certain forms of Christianity, too, may not contain a similar leaven of error.

There being scarcely one of the Divine attributes against which Omnism has not been supposed to militate, it will be necessary to examine the charge of carnality which has in consequence been brought against it in detail. We may dismiss the accusation sometimes included in the above, of trifling with God's faithfulness and truth, by the simple observation, that it being our sincere and solemn conviction that these attributes are pledged on our side, we cannot shew them any greater homage than we do in our defined and firm expectation. The question is one simply of scriptural evidence.

Universalism is supposed to militate against God's holiness and justice. There is a preliminary difficulty in treating this topic, from the want of a clear definition of terms. The term *holiness*, as ascribed to God in Scripture, is often, perhaps generally, a comprehensive one, including all the positive moral attributes, and the negative one of purity—absence of sin. But it seems sometimes to have a more restricted meaning, and if we analyse the idea of moral perfection, I think we shall find there is one essential attribute for which this term seems required—delight in moral beauty, and recoil from its opposite. If holiness be taken in the former sense in the charge, of course that can only be met by separating the different attributes from one another, as in the course of this investigation will be done. If it be taken in the latter, we can meet the charge at once, and in few words, by observing that Universalism, which declares God's constant delight, occupation, and determination to be the restoration of all His creatures to holiness and perfection, cannot with any reason be accused of being opposed to this attribute.

We next come to consider the Divine attribute of justice. And as the result of our investigation, I think we shall find that, while to say the least it allows of the final happiness of all, it does not permit the eternal misery of any. This attribute, as well as holiness, has been supposed to be included in benevolence; and at first sight it does look very like that virtue, taken in its negative aspect—justice contenting itself with absence from wrong, whereas benevolence desires positive good. It might, therefore, seem that the former must be included in the latter, as absence of darkness is included in light. But the want of coincidence in the manifesta-

tion of these two qualities in human nature will soon suggest the idea that they must be distinct. If justice were included in benevolence, you would expect that where there was any benevolence, there should be perfect justice. This, however, is far from being the case. Indeed, benevolence imperfectly developed, as in man, is compatible with much perversion of justice, and an eminently benevolent man is often less just than another who is his inferior in benevolence. We must, therefore, conclude that there is something positive in justice. And now, if we go back to our first idea of the quality, we shall mark that it is not the absence of evil, but of *wrong*, that it demands. There may be wrong when there is no positive evil inflicted, or even in some cases some approach towards good. Ingratitude, absence of natural affection, the payment of only half a debt, an insufficient appreciation of merit—all appear to us in the light of wrongs, and offend our sense of justice.

We see now that justice has to do with the connexion of parts among themselves, and of each with the whole. Benevolence will rejoice in good wherever it sees it—justice will derive pain rather than pleasure from it, unless it come up to the mark, and unless it be apportioned to the right individual. Benevolence thinks only of the amount, justice only of the apportionment, of good. The one concerns itself with the mass, the other pre-eminently with the individual; or rather it views the mass not *as a mass*, but as composed of individuals. I am speaking throughout of benevolence in the abstract, and as it would act if unmodified by any other attribute. It is true also that benevolence will indirectly rejoice in justice (even when apparently opposed to it), just as it does in holiness, because in a perfect system the *apportionment*

and the *nature* of the happiness enjoyed greatly affect its ultimate amount. But here I am only treating of immediate impulses. Justice presupposes a certain standard to which all is referred. Hence it is definite in its claims and rigid. It cannot be satisfied with less, and it would not be itself if it could take more than its due. It cannot rest short of a certain point, and must rest there. Hence in a perfect state it might at first sight seem to be inactive and to have only a negative character. But when we remember that it is justice that must *maintain* this harmony and equilibrium, we see that its action must be constant. In that beautiful order of things which obtains in the universe, one of uniformity in the midst of variety, there is between the interests and rights of different beings, reaction and interaction of the most complicated kind; hence justice, which adjusts all, is seen to be a discriminative quality. The law of progress demands change: wrong springs up in some quarter, and the harmony of the whole is threatened, and justice becomes a conservative and corrective quality. A new element being introduced, sacrifices have to be made; and self-love, which shrinks from pain or uneasiness, and benevolence, which seeks the immediate and unremitting happiness of each individually as well as of the whole collectively, have to yield their *immediate* impulses to the regulator, justice, which appears in the former case a magnanimous, in the latter a stern quality, but in both preserves its, in one sense, negative nature, for deviation by a hair's-breadth would involve imperfection. Wrong continuing and apparently triumphing, justice becomes itself a reaction; grief and indignation are excited, and justice becomes an emotional quality. But here creature justice differs from that of

the Supreme. He being perfect, incapable of change, of surprise or emotion properly so called (though perhaps His whole existence is one perpetuity of rapt emotion)—His power over His creatures being irresistible and absolute—things appearing to Him not in their transitory and apparent, but in their final, their real character—in His eyes evil never triumphs. And while, taken in itself, it is utterly abhorrent to His nature, wanting that stamp of reality which eternity alone gives in the eyes of Him who exists in eternity, and by the neutralising power of the future, can look on things that are as though they were not, as well as on things that are not as though they were, evil can be viewed by Him only with calm composure. But it does not follow from this that *we* should look on it with composure. We are the creatures of time and limitation. Things often act upon us separately because we cannot grasp them in their combination. Evil does not cease to be evil (a thing in itself to be hated and shunned) because in God's purpose it invariably must be productive of good. And thus, as it is impossible for us to grasp more than a very limited portion of the vast reality of things, if evil does not affect us as its natural qualities should do, with sorrow and indignation, it is far more likely to arise from unsusceptibility than from more comprehensive susceptibility in us.

In the perfection of the moral nature of any being is included the being duly affected by moral good and evil. If susceptibility and knowledge are perfect, as in God they are, good in our universe not only neutralising evil, but being in immense excess, no painful emotion will be possible, all emotion being unneutralised feeling. But with us knowledge is so deficient in depth, extent,

and realisation, that evil must often appear unneutralised. And thus ethical sensibility at the sight of moral evil must often kindle into indignation, which thus appears a noble and elevating attribute, raising us nearer to God and to perfection. Therefore when God is described anthropomorphously, this emotion is appropriately ascribed to Him. It conveys to our minds, with a vividness otherwise unattainable, His hatred of sin and determination to punish it. Our changeable human emotions, arising from fluctuations of frame, are fruits of imperfection, and even good ones may clash. Thus, *as emotions*, justice and benevolence may come into collision, and from differences either of nature, susceptibility, or of circumstances and exercise, emotional justice and emotional benevolence may be respectively dominant in different individuals. But in God they must perfectly harmonise, and never for one instant jar with one another, far less can one ultimately triumph at the expense of the other. If, therefore, it is proved that perfect benevolence must desire universal happiness, it is certain perfect justice will prefer no claim incompatible with it.

I may, however, be referred to my own words, and reminded that, while *emotional* benevolence might desire the eventual happiness of all, enlightened benevolence, such as that which fills the bosom of God, surrendering its immediate impulses, may desire something different. Let us, therefore, proceed to apply to the question the strict test of justice.

Though we all feel the appropriateness of connecting punishment with sin, it is not so easy to explain it. Its use in the way of example and correction, is not a sufficient explanation. Even when it answers neither of

these ends, which it often does not, we feel that punishment is right; and when it does answer them, it is not simply as doing so that we approve of it. The connexion between guilt and suffering lies deep in the foundations of eternal propriety.

The harmony between holiness and happiness is so perfect and so *necessary*, that neither can by any possibility be *reconciled* with the opposite of the other, though such an unnatural union may for a time be partially effected. Justice, which is so pre-eminently an appreciator of fitness and congruity, cannot rest satisfied till it has brought about, in either case, a more harmonious combination—moral with physical good, moral with physical evil. And that same fitness which determines the combinations, requires also that they be in certain proportions, and determines what those proportions be. In other words, whether physical good and evil be or be not admissible into the universe on other grounds than those of reward and punishment—a question we shall consider later—on *these* grounds they must be in definite proportions. This rule we feel to apply to our own actions. It must do so equally with those of God; and assuredly it is a rule to which He will conform. Confining our attention, at present, to the subject of punishment, it is not conceivable that He who has given us a sense whereby we can so nicely appreciate the right medium between improper lenity and undue severity in human laws, should disregard or outrage it in His own. It is true that justice, while explicit and determined when it can adjudge the case, is slow to be certain that it can. Concerning itself pre-eminently with mutual relations and exact adjustments, it requires a far completer knowledge and keener insight than benevolence. On this

account it is much more difficult for us to determine what God's justice will demand, than to know what His benevolence will desire. In fact, it is in general necessary that He Himself should inform us on the former point.

For one thing, we are far from fully knowing the one element; how then can we pronounce on the other? The amount of any one man's sins in the sight of God, composed as it is of the minute, partly hidden, and accumulated evil of a lifetime, of thought, word, and deed, our ignorance and the obtuseness of our moral sense disables us from estimating; but as its precise amount is perfectly known to God, the punishment He awards must needs be precise, corresponding, finite.

This train of argument might seem conclusive against the doctrine of eternal misery. But there are various ways in which Eternists have eluded its force. Some have done so by a strange and mysterious use of the word *infinite*, founding the infinitude of the punishment of sinners on that of the justice which inflicts it. This term *infinite* is one of those much more used than clearly conceived of, but we may safely say it is only abused when in any way it would alter the essential nature of the thing of which it is predicated. Now we have seen that it is the character of justice to prefer an exact and therefore limited claim. How unmeaning then the phrase, that finite suffering can never satisfy infinite justice! Others, with correcter views of the nature of the attribute, and anxious perhaps to reconcile their belief of an eternity of punishment with their sense of due proportion between the debt and the penalty, found on one or two ill-understood Old Testament texts, and pronounce the transgression of the sinner infinite, sin being, according to them, an infinite evil.

This notion of sin being an infinite evil is founded on its being directed against a being of infinite perfections. But the perfections of one being, abstractly considered, cannot affect the duty of another towards him: they can only affect it so far as they modify the relation between them. It is the relation in which we stand towards other beings which constitutes the standard of our duty towards them. Now this standard being, as any standard must be, exact, the deviations from it must be so too. In other words, all sin must be definite, *i.e.*, finite. Such is the view espoused, perhaps without any exception, by the theologians of the present day.

One writer (and though none has probably worked it out in so thorough and elaborate a manner, the idea may be traced in others; for instance, in Dr Hamilton) would extricate himself from the difficulties of Eternism in quite an opposite direction; viz., by making a distinction between an eternal duration and an infinite amount of suffering.—

"This," said Mr Somers, "is a point which, if touched upon at all, requires to be thoroughly discussed, and as this might prove tedious to all but out-and-out metaphysicians, I shall for the present skip it over."

There are others (and amongst these Dr Hamilton may properly be classed) who, while acknowledging that the sin of a finite being, in a finite time, must be finite, found the justice of an eternal punishment on the continued perpetration of sin by the condemned in hell. In the first place, there is much reason to believe that sin ceases at death. It is said (Rom. vi. 7) the dead are free from sin.* But not to insist on this at present,

* One of the texts often brought forward to confirm an opposite opinion seems far from conclusive—Rev. xxi. 8. The reference appears to be to the *former* lives of the condemned persons. Some of the crimes here mentioned

future punishment is always described in Scripture as the penalty of the sins of *this* life, with no reference whatever to any committed afterwards. At any rate, the argument for the justice of endless punishment has in this view entirely shifted its grounds; for though we should admit that justice allows or requires that endless sin be associated with endless suffering, we still may deny that justice could have anything to object to a scheme in which sin and suffering were alike cut short. We must, however, go further than this. Justice in its highest sense not only allows, but demands this issue.

It is lamentable to think what low and confined notions of this attribute of the Divinity are entertained by some men, notions whereby it is perverted into a wrathful vengeance towards His delinquent creatures, or at least restricted to a sense of their demerit, to the exclusion, in either case, of the perception and feeling of reciprocal personal obligation—a perception which must be exquisite, and a feeling which must be vivid, both in the highest degree, in the All-perfect.

Regarding as it does mutual relations, it is one of the fundamental principles of justice that claims must be mutual. God, as by undisputed right the Ruler and Judge of His creatures, has claims on their obedience and submission, but also acknowledges their claim on Him to a just and exact administration. As a Father, He claims their reverence and love, but owes them in return protection and maintenance. To sum up all, as

are such as it is scarcely supposable there should be an opportunity of committing in hell, nor in those agonising flames any inclination to commit. If, however, there be no sin, it is not necessary to suppose there is any *virtue* in hell. The fierce torments there endured will probably, while they last, absorb the whole being, to the exclusion of any other idea.

an all-perfect and all-bountiful Creator, He claims that complete surrender of heart and life which His sovereign and undeserved goodness demands, but owes also that perfect and unceasing care which entire dependence claims. Non-existence can have no rights, therefore clearly God owed it not to His universe to call it into being; but once created, it derives the claim which all existence mutually owes and prefers—freedom from injury. While yet in the utter weakness of non-existence, we certainly could not have in any sense injured God, therefore could not deserve evil at His hands. While, therefore, we lay quite at His mercy, in regard to the nature He should give, and the circumstances in which He should place us, He was bound in justice to injure us in neither manner. This was all to which He was bound. He might give us an existence which could neither produce pleasure nor pain, or one in which pain and pleasure might be equally balanced. But to have given us a nature, or placed us in a condition which *could* issue in eternal, incalculable, and irremediable moral and natural evil, would have made the act of God in creating a very questionable boon, and on the supposition of such a result being *foreseen* as actually to arise in the case of many, would have made it towards them a dreadful injustice.

I may be met with the excuse (for I can give it no more dignified name) that those same laws which produce all natural and moral evil are inherently wise and good, and work good to the majority of creation, though in exceptional cases they result in evil. In human institutions this would be an allowable excuse. We do not expect them to be able to include all supposable cases, and therefore must be content to sacrifice the

exceptions to the rule. But this is clearly the result of human imperfection. We cannot suppose that the Supreme Jehovah could not have framed laws for His universe which should work for the eventual good of each individual in it. We cannot doubt that God could have created a universe composed only of happy and uniformly happy beings. As actuality does not correspond with this idea, we see that a creation, in which there was a temporary intermixture of evil was, on the whole, preferable in the eyes of God. Now, this would not have been the case if, in order to a greater general good by means of evil, *one* being required to be eventually sacrificed. Justice cannot merge the interests of the unit in those of the mass, and the claims of justice are far more peremptory than those of benevolence. To have to inflict *wrong*, therefore, on one of His helpless children would not have reconciled God to a *thence* resulting advantage to countless millions.

In this train of reasoning, the evil spirits must be included along with men, for they have the same common Creator. He owes it to them by the greatest of all claims, that of dependence, not to make their existence in the end a curse, but to equalise its natural and moral evil with corresponding good. We cannot believe they would any of them have been created except to answer some good purpose; but, from the principles laid down above, it would not be enough that their existence should prove on the whole a blessing to other creatures, if it were to be an injury to *them*. But not only does God's justice extend to all, "His tender mercies are over all His works," and He must desire positive good to accrue to every creature of His hand. His wisdom and His power are adequate to His wishes; His resources

are boundless, His time unlimited, the result, therefore, is secure. Let those disposed to dwell on the obstacle presented in the case of the evil spirits, by the odiousness of their character, recollect that that character will perish with their present being, and in their case, as in others, there remains the resource of revival.

It is this clear idea of justice which will enable us to meet the objection often urged, "If it is consistent with the perfect happiness of God that some of His creatures should suffer in time, why not to eternity? Benevolence must desire unremitted as well as universal happiness." This is certainly the immediate impulse of benevolence, but if directed by wisdom, it may not only acquiesce in, but itself promote the mixture of temporary evil as productive of greater final good. The happiness of the present hour may, with the greatest calmness, be sacrificed or exchanged for suffering to ensure the bliss of a succeeding age; but were an *individual* to be deprived of his little quantum of happiness and sacrificed for the benefit of the mass, a fundamental attribute of the Deity would be violated.

We cannot, indeed, explain why God could not produce an equal sum of happiness without the intermixture of evil, but our difficulty here is of a totally different nature from that which met us in the other case. The other affects the moral character of God and the ends He proposes to Himself; this, the means He may see fit to employ to accomplish His ends. Butler has well shewn that it is much easier to predict the first, with regard to any being, than the last. And we may remark, the more perfect and the more powerful a being is, the more will this contrast hold good, as his character will thereby become more simple, his wisdom more intricate

and impenetrable, and his resources the more inexhaustible.

To appreciate this difference, we must, I think, admit, that while the power of God is in that sense absolute, that no other can resist His, it is not absolute in the sense that He can bring about *any* ends by *any* means. To suppose this would be to suppose that there is no original fitness and propriety in the means which God does employ; that the whole scheme of the universe, with its interminable variety and exquisite adaptations, its wonderful complexity, and grand and beautiful unity, was nothing but a series of arbitrary connexions, which might have all been reversed or disarranged, and there still be retained the same propriety and fitness. Just as, in order to feel any intelligent admiration for the moral character of God, we must believe that there is an eternal standard of right independent of His will; so, to admire the Divine wisdom and the exquisite *taste* displayed in creation, we must admit that there is an equally independent standard of beauty and propriety. It is only in this way we can believe God to delight in His creation, considered as a mechanism. If it had no inherent beauty and wonder in it, He could not *feel* its wonder and beauty.

Now, all law brings with it necessity, and therefore, in one sense, limits power. If the means chosen by God to produce His ends are according to the eternal fitness of things, He could not have exchanged them and still conformed to that fitness. If He could by means of any other have produced equally well the same identical results, these do not deserve the praise of being the best: those others would then have been equally good. This limitation of power, however, far from diminishing the

happiness of God, doubtless contributes much to it. How is it with ourselves? We feel an interest and pleasure in the exercise of wisdom, power, and skill in the accomplishment of difficult enterprises, by delicate and penetrating perception, and a judicious application of means to ends. Things that would otherwise be indifferent, or even disagreeable to us, become valuable and desirable, as promotive of our aims; and the amount of contrivance, the complicated and minute machinery required, the length and laboriousness of the process, are so many elements of gratification. Now, this could not be if these complicated means were not *necessary* to the result—if it was all play-work—a self-imposed law originating in our own caprice. And it can scarcely fail to be the same with God. He feels ineffable delight in His own perfections, and it being in the nature of those perfections, as Edwards has beautifully shewn, to diffuse and communicate themselves, He seeks for objects with whom to share them. He creates other beings to receive and to return His love, and to reflect His image. Now, if He could effect this, if He could raise them to the height of finite perfection equally well by any method He chose, as He must choose one particular method or chain of means, and must in that case do so by an arbitrary exercise of will, He could have no satisfaction in His choice, as it could have no excellence in it, nothing appropriate to the end, since any other out of the infinitely possible methods would have been equally good. Indeed, it is vain speaking of methods or means at all, for we can scarcely suppose they would exist. The same law, or rather lawlessness, which could dispense with any particular character in the means, would dispense with means altogether, for it is only by virtue of some particular

quality in the means we can suppose them promotive of this end; and if an all-wise Being *could* dispense with means, we may imagine He certainly would do so, as viewing them only as needless encumbrances intervening between the purpose and its execution. We may almost say that on such a supposition wisdom would be an unnecessary attribute, its place being taken by love, which, by a simple volition, would make its objects supremely blest; and by holiness, which would make them at once perfectly holy. We must, therefore, conclude that an intermixture of evil is *necessary* to the perfect development of good. We probably should not have judged thus beforehand. We should have thought that the eternal and sovereign law of fitness would have worked itself out in smooth, and flowing, and never-jarring harmony; that Love, with ever-beaming smile, and strong but gentle grasp, would lead its willing sons through flowery paths from innocence to perfection. But no! It is not thus we were to mount that height sublime—Such is not the problem of the universe. That was to be spoken not wholly in Zephyr's gentle whisper, but also in the loud tones of the raging tempest's roar. It was not written all in Spring's fresh and luxuriant bloom, or Summer's riches and radiance, but in Autumn's changeful decay, and Winter's barrenness and gloom. Hard is the problem, but it will be solved. There is a key, however we may lack the skill to apply it, which, as the Persian poet says, *will* unlock every riddle—the key of love. We shall one day see how all things are working together for good, and even now we may trace a faint light glimmering through the dark. Where the possibility, had sin and sorrow never been known, of the wondrous display of the great and lovely attributes of

God, with which the universe has been enriched? His condescension, gentle forbearance, and long-suffering—His tender compassion and forgiving love? Evil may and will pass away,—and will, for each individual, one day be as though it had not been, but this treasure, this manifestation of God will not pass away.

“A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.”

Then what an incalculable amount of good is thus produced in the mutual relations of *created* beings—these very same qualities in dim and derived, but not unreal beauty, beaming from soul to soul! The amount of this development throughout the universe may be immensely greater than we have any conception of. Beyond our own sphere there is one exquisite glimpse of it given us by our Lord, when He tells us of the joy amongst the holy angels over the repenting sinner.

Our mental and spiritual history bears ample testimony to the power of God to make outward evil prove to us a blessing in disguise, by the exercise it affords to various excellent graces. What is essential to humility, is not, it is true, a sense of sin, but of creature emptiness, weakness, and nothingness, and the Divine majesty and all-sufficiency; but it is clear that a consciousness of personal imperfection and guilt, may greatly strengthen those other feelings. Submission is only one phasis of that childlike love and trust in God, which must cause the blest to repose in secure confidence in the continuance of their own happy state, and to believe in, if they cannot always trace, the wisdom and love which regulate the concerns of the universe; but it is easy to see how this conviction may, in the case of some beings, be rendered more intense and vivid by means of a personal

experience which calls it into lively exercise in the form of submission. And thus may sickness, pain, want, and bereavement; stunning and weary disappointments, and perhaps still wearier *disenchantments*; crushed and crushing affections; poignant mortifications, distracting fears and agonising regrets; the emptiness, the perplexity, the turmoil and the jar of mortal life—prepare us for the blessed final state, where hope and love shall in fruition learn to comprehend their own aspirings—where submission shall rise into triumph, and where, in serene security, quaffing the ever-replenished cup of heart's content, we shall for ever ride and reign superior to all that once appeared adverse to us or to the universe.

It is too true, indeed, that sorrow sometimes hardens, and misfortune sours, and baleful are often the effects of disappointment and despair; and, therefore, we cannot maintain that the connexion between suffering and amendment is by any means necessary, but it is enough that in certain cases it does take place. The different connexion in others must be owing to some higher law including sin with suffering in the evil which is to be made instrumental to good. If any one should be unreflecting enough to object that this doctrine would destroy the distinction between good and evil, let him remember how many things in our daily life, themselves bad, are desired for the sake of something else, but, while accomplishing that further end, are all the while disliked in themselves, as still retaining their own proper character. Some would get rid of the difficulty by accounting for the introduction of evil in the first place, and by an easy consequence its eternal continuance thereafter, by a supposed necessity arising from the conditions of moral freedom

and virtue. All intelligent beings, say they, are moral agents, therefore possessed of free will, which, making them capable of holiness, renders them also of course capable of sin. This is enough to account for sin's arising and also for its continuance, and if sin continues, suffering must do so too. What a hiatus in the argument here! In what sense are all intelligent beings capable of sin? Just this. They are not physically (using the term in its widest sense, as including the intellectual conditions) unable to sin. But no more is God. He *might* feel hatred and anger in the sense that no foreign force and no intellectual incapacity prevent His doing so. Still there is an impossibility, the greatest of all, that He should—a moral impossibility. It is not in His nature to sin. Now, why should not an intelligent and responsible *creature* possess this same blessed incapacity, not indeed like this an original, but a derived and sustained incapacity? Why might not they all be as incapable of the slightest offence, as the noblest are of the grossest crimes? Why was the lot of those hosts of blessed spirits that have retained, and are destined ever to keep, their pristine innocence not that of all? I do not put these questions for the sake of answering them, but rather to point out that, while they are unanswered, we must look for the solution of the enigma of the existence of evil, elsewhere than where it has been sought—in the nature of the will or that of virtue.

In this life of probation and conflicting interests, moral worth is so much a thing of exercise and growth we are apt to fancy struggle is necessary to strength; hence, complete inward harmony sometimes produces an effect on us not unlike that of weakness and deficiency,

and goodness without an effort is opposed to conquering virtue, and postponed to it. On the other hand, virtue in this world is so imperfect, yields so much to lower impulses, we come sometimes to contrast it unfavourably with that innocence which in itself is only a negative good, implying absence of evil, and delight in the last the most. In the former case we admire and reverence virtue, in the latter we love and cherish innocence. But perfect virtue may not only overcome but feel no difficulty in overcoming evil. We should think it no praise to a man, placed in circumstances favourable to virtue, that it was only by a struggle he kept free from murder, robbery, and such crimes. To have any esteem for him, we must suppose that he never for one moment dreamt of committing them. But this is not all, we should and ought to think the more highly of his virtue if it not only overcame in the end to prevent *action*, but prevailed all along to check the rise of sinful *inclination*.

For this it is not necessary that the lesser good should have no attraction. In a being composed as man is, of many propensions of unequal dignity, each has its office and claim. Virtue supposes not the sole action of one force, however honourable, but the equilibrium of all; the obedience of all to that immutable standard of right to which conscience refers. Even in God, virtue is the result not of the monopoly of one good principle, but the harmonious action of all. Holiness, benevolence, justice, a desire for and delight in His own happiness, and even, I think we may venture to suppose, a personal desire for the love and approbation of His creatures, independent of any happiness that may accrue thereby to them—all exert a perfectly harmonious influence in the eternal mind.

To return to ourselves. If a man was only honest from deficient acquisitiveness (to use the phrenological term), and was solely preserved from unprincipled ambition and selfish vanity by want of energy, and carelessness as to the opinions of others, we might rely on his innocence issuing unscathed from certain temptations, but could not admire his virtue in resisting them.

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CHAPTER X.

RETURN HOME—CALVINISM AND ARMINIANISM—
DR PAYNE'S VIEWS.

So completely has the *theological* been paramount in the present work, that I have hitherto neglected, as I find, to inform my readers that Mr Somers was a considerable landed proprietor in one of the midland counties of England, Ashburn being the name of his family estate, where he resided along with his mother and his only unmarried sister, whose name was Mary. A few days previous to the one we last described, he had received a letter from home, mentioning that Mrs Somers had had rather an alarming attack of illness, but was now almost convalescent. He wrote in reply, Elizabeth freely concurring, that on the slightest return of similar symptoms they were to be written to, and would return home instantly. The day following the conversation last detailed was a Sunday. Monday's post brought a letter from Mary Somers, saying she hoped it was quite unnecessary to bring them home, but her mother was not so well again. The last words were, "Mamma is again better. I *quite* think it is a false alarm." However, of course, Frederic and Elizabeth prepared to start immediately, thankful to God for the enjoyment they had had in their friends' society, and promising to keep

up intercourse on the high themes they had dwelt on together by means of letters.

As they journeyed homewards, Frederic was often silent, thinking of his mother, and Elizabeth's thoughts turned to her parents. She was truly glad she had resolved to write to them of her change of views, and their reply had been full of kindness. Still it was strange and painful, too, to meet them again, no longer quite one with them in religious belief. Then she longed, and her heart bounded at the thought of being able to bring them round to her own view of things. 'But how am I to speak to the tenants (*my* tenants—how strange!) at Ashburn? However, Frederic will shew me how to set all that right.'

They found Mrs Somers nearly herself again. The first greetings over, she expressed much regret at the curtailment of their visit. Frederic looked at her with one of his beaming smiles, and then turned to Elizabeth. "Oh, Mrs Somers!" exclaimed she, "I don't believe you have any idea how his heart is wrapt up in you! I don't believe in all his life he ever was sorry to come back to you; and I am sure that will not be his feeling when he returns and finds that his fears about your health were groundless."

Elizabeth's parents, Admiral and Mrs Howard, resided in a pretty villa, named Linnetlea, about three quarters of a mile from —, the nearest town to Ashburn. Since Elizabeth's marriage, Mrs Howard's only remaining sister, who was a good many years younger than herself, and a widow, had come to reside with them, along with her only child, a dear little girl of seven, a great darling with her old uncle. Their sailor son was also at home with them at this time. Elizabeth was still a

good deal knocked up on the morrow after her return home; but on the following day they went early into town to spend the day at Linnetlea. There they were received with open arms. Great especially was the old man's joy at a renewed sight of his much-loved daughter. After a time, however, he perceived that something was on her mind, and said, "What are you thinking of, my child?"

Elizabeth replied, looking down, "I am thinking what is it that *you* think."

"What do I think? Why I think you are the happiest of women, or, if not, you are the most ungrateful."

"Oh, I did not mean that. That is true, indeed, but—however, we will talk of it another time."

"Oh yes, I know what you mean. We *will* talk of that another time. But, my Lilly, you should know your father's heart by this time. You should know that, while indignant, bitter, perhaps too indignant, too bitter, against moral obliquity, either of action or judgment, and sometimes contemptuous, too, I must admit [with a smile], towards shallowness of view, I am always ready to respect opinions *honestly* and *soberly* adopted; and that all *his* [emphatically laying his hand on Frederic's shoulder] are, and ever will be, thus adopted, I am certain. I can trust him; and you, too, Elizabeth, I think I can trust. For the honesty I can out and out: I am not quite so sure as to the sobriety."

"But, papa, you think of me as I was a dozen years ago. You forget I am older now."

"Very well! Perhaps so! At any rate it is all right as to the *heart*, and that's enough." Saying this, he folded her in his arms, and then the conversation turned on other topics.

As they drove home, Elizabeth said to her husband, "I have not much anxiety now at the bottom of my heart about my dear parents' feelings towards us in this matter; but what do you think of your mother and the tenants?"

"Oh, you need not fear my mother. She is a woman of deep piety, but, though a Scotchwoman, she is perhaps even too regardless of minor differences in religious tenets—I mean such as are not vital. I do not say, dear Elizabeth, that your new relations with her will not involve you in *some* difficulties; it is scarcely possible but they should, though I have no fear that your happiness will be thus impaired, or your repose of heart. On the score which you refer to, you have nothing to apprehend. As for the tenants, most of them are already aware that I do not believe in eternal misery."

Elizabeth.—"But I shall feel quite hampered in speaking to them on religious subjects, if I may not go on to Omnism."

Fred.—"But do so by all means. We must both do it."

Elizabeth.—"Well, I shall first hear how you speak to them; but, do you know, I think we shall find it somewhat difficult to get them to understand us. It is rather unfortunate that our view is necessarily so metaphysical."

Fred.—"Some would say that was sufficient to condemn it. Bible truth, they say, is clear and simple, and so on. But you know how to reply to such objections as well as I do."

Elizabeth.—"With some people to say a thing is metaphysical, is the same as saying, it is fanciful and untrue. Do you remember how admirably Edwards

replies to a similar objection urged against his view of necessity? He says, to object to a truth that it is founded on metaphysical reasoning, is as foolish as to object to sentiments because they are expressed in French or Latin. If the thing is true, it does not matter to what science it belongs. The question is not whether what is said is metaphysics, logic, or mathematics, English, French, or Mohawk; but the question is, 'Is the reasoning good? Are the arguments conclusive?' And then he goes on to say that we could not *prove* such points as this, that the soul is incorporeal, that thoughts are not round, that there is a God, and that He has such and such attributes, without having recourse to close metaphysical reasoning."

Fred.—"That is all admirable! The matter, however, is, as you stated it, as a practical question, not without difficulty; but I expect that we shall find things smoothed before us. The lower orders have this advantage, that from greater simplicity and directness of mind, they are usually readier to feel the force of the *ergo*, without entangling themselves in the intricacies of the *quomodo*."

I shall make large extracts for my readers from the correspondence between the friends of Liverpool and Ashburn, and begin with a letter from Frederic to Mr Merton:—

"MY DEAR WILLIAM,—You are quite right in saying that, as we left the matter, there was no proof adduced for Omnism, but such as is built on natural religion. We did nothing to prove it a Scripture doctrine. I had thought in my first letter to you on the subject, to adduce an array of texts in support of the view; but, it has struck me, that it may be well first to advert to certain

modifications of gospel truth, whereby Eternists have sought to meet and repel the force of these, in my view, decidedly Omnist texts. As I am now dealing with those who do not look beyond the proximate, I shall, for the time, adopt their limitation of salvation, and some other terms.

“The Calvinist of the old school has a clear, scriptural, philosophical, and consistent account to give of the origin and progress of salvation; though, when we come to details, his psychology is sometimes at fault; much less so, however, than that of opponents. According to him, God foreordains, therefore foresees, all things whatsoever. He determined from all eternity to save such and such persons only of the human race, the elect. As He connects means with ends, He also determined to interpose the atonement and mediation of His Son Jesus Christ, in favour of His elect, and, at the set time, to work in these individually, whatever He constituted a preliminary to salvation; which working, once begun, is continued to their lives' end. He is just to all, but bounteous to whom He pleases. His choice of subjects of His favour, turns on His pleasure, not on any moral superiority in them to others, at the time of His beginning to work in them what is conditional to salvation. In consistence with these views, the old Calvinistic writers maintained that redemption is particular, that Christ purchased only the elect.

“But, however much Calvinism may recommend itself to our reason, as clear and consistent so far as it goes, it is a system inherently offensive to human pride; and its combination *de facto*, with a thing *de jure* quite foreign to it, namely, Eternism, has ever deepened the dislike to it in those otherwise not predisposed in its

favour. It was thought, and with reason, extremely harsh so to arrange things that a part of the human race, to appearance the greater part, should be under a moral impossibility of escaping everlasting misery. But men set the wrong way to work. Instead of inquiring whether it was possible to reconcile eternal woe with the Divine attributes, or whether Scripture contains any warrant for the tenet, they set themselves to attack the impregnable fortress of Calvinism. Retaining the doctrine which must ever create confusion in exegesis and theology, and making no addition to the number of the saved, they proceeded to frame a system which they represented as fairer and more impartial. This system is called Arminianism; though in this, as in other cases, the same general designation has been used, at different times, to represent views between which there has been much discordance.

“According to the old Arminians, God’s foreknowledge extends to all things; but His foreappointment does not extend to the volitions of men, which, on the contrary, springs from the free-will of the creature. If these are foreknown, therefore, it is not because foreordained, but in virtue of a faculty or species of knowledge supposed to reside in the Supreme, and to respect nothing but this class of future events. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, Molina, a Spanish Jesuit, and a professor of divinity in Portugal, devised for this a name, *scientia media*, which was adopted by other Arminians.* It is also called *conditionate* foreknowledge. For absolute decrees, which were loudly denounced, conditional were substituted.

* Lectures in Divinity, by the late Dr George Hill of St Andrews, vol. ii. p. 197. This work is in high estimation, and very deservedly.

“God, said they, foreseeing who would, by their conduct and disposition, be the fittest subjects of mercy, accordingly foreordained them to life. I would here simply observe of this system, supposing it reconcilable with what Scripture says of the saints being no worthier before conversion than other men, it does not exalt our ideas of the Divine goodness, nor, in order to salve the Divine justice, present us what is intelligible. The number of the lost is left as before. Those who attempt to shew that in point of fact every man has salvation fairly within his reach, involve themselves in contradictions and gratuitous assumptions. Finally, supposing the scheme open to no objection on this ground, it is not conceivable. A well-intended and fair plan may not be workable. *Scientia media* and *freedom of the will*, as Arminians define it, are words and nothing more. The things they are meant to designate cannot possibly be.

“To the tenets mentioned, was added another, that known under the name of *general redemption*. It is thus expressed in the second of the five Arminian points that gave rise to the celebrated quinquarticular controversy—‘Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, died for all men, and for every individual, so as to obtain for all, by His death, reconciliation and remission of sins; upon this condition, however, that none in reality enjoys the benefit of this remission but the man who believes.’

“This tenet has, in fact, no logical connexion with that of conditional decrees, as may be shewn by a simple illustration. A has a sum of £20,000 owing him—£1000 by each of twenty men, who, not being able to discharge the debt, are thrown into prison. B, touched with their situation, takes steps for settling matters with

the creditor, who accordingly agrees to accept an equivalent for the sum owing him by half the creditors, and to let them go free. There are sufficient reasons, no matter what, for the sum paid by B not being considered by A as an equivalent for the debt of the other ten. Now, in one point of view, it is indifferent on what footing the choice of the happy ten is put, whether it turn on the good pleasure of A or B (Scripture speaks in both ways) which represents absolute decrees, or else on some test of worthiness which represents the conditional decrees of the Arminians. As on either supposition the actual and foreordained deliverance is only partial, on one hypothesis equally with the other the previous ransom may also have been only partial, while in either case the difficulty will remain the same, in supposing a general ransom with only a partial deliverance.* If B discharge the sum due by the twenty debtors, or what A has declared to be a full equivalent for it, it is not easy to see how the retention of any of the number in prison can be accounted for.

“As, therefore, the doctrine of conditional decrees and of general redemption may each be combined with the opposite of the other as well as with that other, they can lend each other no logical support, and must rest each on its own merits.

“It is only with one of these—general redemption—we have now to do, nor shall we proceed to consider this in its old Arminian form, which the old writers sufficiently refuted, but rather, as somewhat modified, it has

* We judge of the value of a ransom by that which it procures. Hence it is to no purpose that some have urged the ampleness of the merits of Christ as an argument for an universal atonement, while they maintain the actual benefit derived to be partial.

of late come prominently forward, combined with views otherwise Calvinistic. I refer to a view, which has been held by others before, but has, with the greatest clearness, explicitness, and ability, been set forth by Dr Payne, in his 'Lectures on Divine Sovereignty, Election, the Atonement,' &c. The author, in the first place, very forcibly replies to objections that have been urged against the necessity of an atonement for the pardon of sin, as though penitence and reformation must be the only requisites for it. He points out that the punishment God must inflict on sin, must not be viewed as a pecuniary debt owing to a private individual, which that individual has a perfect right to remit. It is a moral debt owing to a righteous law, which it was necessary for God, as the Lawgiver and Upholder of the law to claim. As, therefore, the punishment of the offender is only required in order to establish the authority of the law, it may be remitted if this end can be equally well answered in another way. This it can be by a substitute, himself owing no debt of suffering, consenting to identify himself with the offender and undergo his punishment for him, and if the substitute be of superior dignity to the culprit, a less amount of suffering on his part will equally vindicate the honour of the law.

"So far we, who believe in the necessity of an atonement, shall probably all agree, but in the further inferences some of us would make from this radical idea of an atonement, Dr Payne, and those whom he represents, would not accompany us, following, as they do, another track. Dr Payne, after expressing surprise that a certain other writer should be able to 'veil from himself the connexion which exists between the sacrifice of Christ and the forgiveness of sin,' adds, 'Did not the atone-

ment of the Saviour exhibit the righteousness of God, the rectitude of His law, and the impossibility of transgressing it with impunity? Did it not thus render it possible for the Moral Governor to pardon sin, without endangering the safety of His government? And if we maintain this, what do we, in effect, but affirm, in different words, the *tendency* of that atonement to secure forgiveness?' From this, and other expressions, it appears that this writer looks on Christ's death, endured as it was for *sin*, as an illustrious *example* of the implacability of the Divine law, which, after thus justifying itself, may give way to mercy. Now, if this were all—if law only required to *shew*, as it were, its opposition to sin, we could understand and subscribe to the following passage—'That satisfaction which renders it consistent with the perfections of Jehovah, and with the claims and safety of His government, to bestow pardon upon *one* man, must, of necessity, render it equally consistent with His character and His office, to bestow pardon upon all.' And thus we arrive at the idea of an atonement, rendered by its very indefiniteness all-sufficient; an atonement, to use Dr Payne's words, 'not made, strictly speaking, for one man or for all men; but made to God for sin, *i.e.*, on account of sin.'

"Now there seems to me to be a very serious objection to this theory, that while it retains the word 'substitution,' in the full and proper sense of the idea it discards it. Christ is, in fact, still described as the representative, but not as the substitute of sinners—nor is He so much described as the representative of guilty man, as the representative of *guilt*, a kind of personification of guilt. Just as the ringleader in a popular insurrection might be taken as a representative of his followers

—a sort of personification of rebellion—and put to death as an example to the rest, to shew what awaits that offence, after which vindication of the honour of the law, its rigour might be unbent towards the remaining offenders, and pardon granted. But it may be said, ‘The cases are not parallel. The ringleader here was himself guilty, so that he could not be a substitute for his followers, as Christ is for sinful men.’ The circumstance here alluded to, of Christ being guiltless, does indeed constitute an important point of difference, but still it does not seem of itself to furnish *substitution*. According to the view here combated, Christ assumes the position of a *guilty being*, but does not take the place of any one guilty man or number of men. It is as though He had come forward and said, ‘It is necessary that there should be some illustrious example of the hostility of the righteous law of God to sin in the punishment of guilt, I, therefore, though not in reality of the number of the guilty, include myself amongst them, that on me the penalty of the law may fall.’ The threat of the law, however, is, not that there be some illustrious example of the punishment of transgression, but that every transgressor and every transgression of it shall be punished. Now, therefore, we have a foundation for real substitution. If the individual sinner is not to benefit from the punishment of guilt in the abstract, but must have his own guilt punished before he is to be admitted to favour, it affords an opportunity for the innocent and holy One to present himself and say, ‘That guilt shall be punished, not in thy person, but in mine; *I* will be thy substitute.’ Now the punishment originally demanded by the law must be definite. Justice has only to do with the definite. This Dr Payne incidentally allows, p. 171.

“ But if the suffering of the real offender must be exact, that of the substitute must be so too, or it could be no equivalent for it. This is very different from saying that it must be identical in kind and degree. As was before said, the higher dignity of the substitute may render a much less amount of suffering on his part necessary. Still there must be an exact proportion, which we cannot appreciate, but which God can. This seems, indeed, a necessary inference from Dr Payne’s remark, that a *less* amount of suffering will suffice from Christ. By *less*, he does not surely mean indefinite. If, indeed, an *indefinitely* small amount would have sufficed, can we suppose our blessed Redeemer would have been called on to suffer intensely as we know he did? If, then, it was necessary he should undergo a certain amount of agony, what was it that determined the sum? Not the heinousness of sin in the abstract. There can be no scale to balance *that* with suffering. It must have been a definite amount of sin, and the sin, therefore, of a definite number of persons. If this chain of argument is followed out, the idea of substitution will be seen to be inconsistent with that of an indefinite atonement, irrespective of the persons for whom it is made, and only to admit of the old alternative of a partial and a more strictly-speaking universal atonement, in either case definite.

“ Besides the intellectual difficulty of reconciling substitution with an irrespective atonement, there is a great moral difficulty in supposing it consistent with one that is in any sense universal, if there is not also universal salvation. What is the meaning of there being vicarious sufferings at all, if it is not that, the substitute bearing the punishment of the person he represents, that other

shall go free? To inflict the penalty on the substitute, and then to demand it over again from the criminal, is so palpably in opposition to the first principles of justice, it seems scarcely necessary, in order to refute the notion, to do more than draw attention to it. God was in no way bound to accept Christ's sufferings as an equivalent for ours; but in doing so, He *bound Himself* to exempt us. Some have shrunk from stating the case thus, as though it were putting it too much in the form of a pecuniary transaction. They say it is as if the believer, like a slave on whom some friend has bestowed the price of his freedom, should approach God, presenting the merits of Christ as his own, and claiming the salvation they have purchased as his due. But this seems to be a mistake. The imputation of our guilt to Christ, and his righteousness to us, must have quite another character from a pecuniary transfer, from the intrinsic nature of the things concerned. The money you give to me is as truly mine now as it was yours before, and I may claim a perfect right to all it may purchase. It is not so with the intrinsic; sin and righteousness cannot be strictly transferred: they can only be imputed. Thus, whatever Christ may do for him, the sinner cannot cease to *deserve* punishment, nor can he come to *merit* heaven. So far as he is considered in himself, he owes the remission of the one to mercy, and the grant of the other to favour. But viewed as God is pleased to view the believer, as in Christ, he has a just claim to present for both.

"Because the debt that Christ or the sinner has to pay, is a definite one, and therefore cannot be paid twice over, this does not liken it to a pecuniary transaction. In point of exactitude, moral relations are as definite as pecuniary ones, but they require a different sense to

estimate them. We are daily called on to exercise both senses in the articles we purchase, the judgments we pass on public laws and private punishments. We judge whether or not this purchase be too dear, whether or not that punishment be too severe for the offence. There seems to be no objection, therefore, to the doctrine of strict substitution on the ground of its definiteness. That, on the other hand, it is so much more interesting and deeply affecting than the other, would perhaps be a dangerous argument if taken alone, but when combined with others it should not be disregarded. How touching is the thought to the individual believer that *his* sins were actually laid on Jesus—that, as a fact, his guilt added one more drop of bitterness to that full cup of woe his adored Redeemer had to drink, and which addition, but for him, he would have been spared. This thought must, of course, be absent from the mind of him who, like Dwight, quoted with approval by Dr Payne, believes that ‘the atonement which was necessary for a world, was equally necessary, and in just the same manner and degree, for an individual sinner.’ It may be that none but Christ could have formed a fit substitute for that sole offender, had there been but one, but our sense of propriety will, I think, revolt from the thought of his having, in that case, endured the same heavy load of suffering which it cost him to ransom an elect world.

“But, after all, the question is not, which view appears the more likely or interesting, but which is the more scriptural. Now, I do not think it can have escaped the notice of any reader of the Bible, that the sacrifice of Christ is not described there as on account of sin in the abstract, but as for the sins of the individual, whether it

be one, or many, or all. It is true that in Isa. liii., it is said, 'Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin,' but this cannot be sin indefinitely, for almost immediately afterwards, it is said, 'My righteous servant shall justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities;' and again, 'He bore the sin of many,' and in ver. 6, 'the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.' Then elsewhere it is said, 'He gave His life a ransom for many,' and, 'He bare our sins in His own body on the tree.' These texts, which convey so clearly the idea of strict substitution, do not consist well at all with that of an atonement having a reference to sin generally.*

"I must again beg not to be understood as implying that those who hold the one deny the other; on the contrary, Dr Payne's book abounds with declarations, I am convinced most sincerely given, of the doctrine of substitution; and he devotes part of his work to its direct proof. He does not seem to have been at all aware that his system virtually abrogated it, at least in its strict sense. Thus, after quoting some such Scripture expressions as, 'Christ died for our sins,' 'died for us,' &c., and giving the Greek prepositions used in these passages, he says, 'All of them are used by classical writers to denote substitution; and without pretending to say they are never used in a loose sense--in the general sense of advantage--we may affirm with confidence that the notion of substitution, or that Christ suffered, strictly speaking, instead of the guilty, could not have been more naturally and significantly expressed than by these

* How unmeaning too, and how little consonant, I venture to say, with the dignified simplicity of Scripture, would have been the declaration in John, "Who is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world," if the satisfaction that was sufficient for one must, in the nature of things, be sufficient for all.

prepositions.' Such is the plasticity of Greek prepositions, as Dr Payne observes, that it seems impossible to nail down any one of them to the sense of, 'instead of;' but the idea of substitution is required by a higher and stricter necessity, that of not giving a very lame sense to a great portion of Scripture, and to another portion no sense at all. The English preposition 'for,' like the Greek *ὑπὲρ*, &c., may be understood either as 'instead of,' or simply 'for the benefit of;' and were we to judge by insulated texts, we might be in difficulty which sense to give. There is one text, however, which now occurs to me, where this last meaning would be quite inapplicable: 'Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.' Now, in the first place, the expression, his being made *a curse* for us, would be a very extraordinary one on any supposition but that of his suffering our punishment; but, moreover, after the mention of the great good Christ had *effected* for us, it would seem a weak expression that should say simply he died *for our benefit*. But if we understand it as shewing how he brought about this end—viz., by suffering *in our stead*—the passage recovers its harmony and full meaning.

"But my letter, which long ago exceeded all conscionable bounds, must now positively terminate. I shall hope very soon, however, to resume the subject."

CHAPTER XI.

DR PAYNE'S VIEWS—REDIVIVAL.

Mr Somers to Mr Merton.

“To return to Dr Payne, I must declare my conviction that while he, doubtless in all sincerity, considers himself as holding the doctrine of substitution, his hypothesis of an indefinite atonement so weakens the force of the texts which seem to support that view, as to bring them to mean little more than what the Unitarians, who deny vicarious suffering, commonly understand by them as dying for our benefit. I mean that the Unitarian may connect Christ's work and death with our salvation, though not *in the same way*, yet about as directly as this hypothesis does. I do not wish this to be considered as an *argumentum ad invidiam*; but what I would wish is, that those who perceive how unsatisfactory and how imperfectly correspondent with Scripture the common Unitarian hypothesis is, should beware how they themselves slide into one something resembling it. The Unitarian says, ‘Christ bearing our sins means his carrying them away by the moral influence of his life and death upon our minds, leading us first to repentance whence we obtain pardon, and then to admiration, love, and imitation—hence holiness. So Christ is indirectly the cause both of our pardon and sanctification.’ The general atonement hypothesis says, ‘Christ, by his

life and death, vindicated the injured honour of the law, and thus by removing one great obstacle out of the way, indirectly procured that pardon which now can directly flow from God to all that believe.' On neither hypothesis is Christ's death necessarily even indirectly the means of pardon. On that of an irrelative atonement it only obtains the *offer* of pardon, nor that universally, as millions perish without the offer reaching them, while of those whom it reaches only a proportion are saved. Now, Dr Payne and those of his way of thinking agreeing with us, that one sure mode of learning the design of God in the death of Christ is to look at the result of that death, draw along with us the conclusion that 'as all men are not directly saved by Christ, all were not intended to be thus actually saved by him.' All, then, that was obtained for mankind at large was an abstract possibility of salvation. Feeling, however, that if this were all, Christ might have died in vain, and heartily acknowledging the necessity of the influences of the Spirit for the production of faith, and all that is necessary to salvation, they further maintain that the Father engaged to secure these blessings to an elect number, whom, therefore, He is described as giving to the Son.

"How far, and in what manner, this scheme connects this engagement with the work of Christ, it is difficult to say, for while in one place Dr Payne says of the title to life justification confers, 'It is given in reward of the Saviour's righteousness,' and goes on to say that His sufferings and death are so 'unspeakably glorious in the eyes of the Father, that they secure, and must secure, a greater revenue of glory to Himself, and for all His people, than they could have secured for themselves had they preserved their integrity;' in another place, he

speaks of God having provided 'a sacrifice so infinite in its value as to render it just to Himself, and safe to His government, to pardon the sins of *all* men *for the sake of it*,' which would seem to say, that in pardoning, God referred only to the *general* work of Christ. And, again, when speaking of the surety-ship of Christ, he says, 'Christ is the surety of His people, because they participate in the benefit and blessing of His work, as if He legally represented them;' which, further down, he explains as being 'on the principle that the mediatorial engagements and work of Christ constitute a moral basis for the extension of holy benevolence to such as were, in themselves, both worthless and wretched.' 'They (the elect) cannot talk, as some have done, of having a price in their hands to purchase it (their deliverance); but of a glorious work to plead, which has so fully satisfied the justice of God, as to permit their salvation, but not to require it.' From these, and many other passages I should gather, that Dr Payne did not regard the death of Christ by itself to have obtained more for the elect than for the rest of mankind; if so, he must have considered the peculiar promises for them to have been made irrespective of that death. How can this view consist with the clear, direct, and certain connexion in such innumerable instances traced in Scripture, between the sacrifice and the blessings that result from it, *e.g.*, in that figure which the Divine word may be truly said to have consecrated, of ransom or redemption? Who ever heard of a ransom that was not, in the first place, definite in amount, corresponding with the object for which it was paid, and had not some such definite object, and a security for its being obtained? The connexion between the paying of the ransom and

the redemption which ensues, is immediate and certain. No contingency, no conditions can intervene between them. And thus it is with the sacrifice of Christ and that for which it was offered; all necessary conditions are secured. Faith, love, perseverance, all that is necessary for the chosen ones to reap the benefit of his sufferings, enters into the reward for which that costly price was paid. If it is necessary to bear in mind the distinction between what justice in the abstract bound God to do, and what His own promise obliged, with reference to the simple exemption from punishment, still more necessary is it with regard to the further blessing of salvation. Not only was God in no way bound in justice to accept Christ's *penal* sacrifice instead of ours, but still more would it be incorrect, preposterous, and foully ungrateful to His free and unfathomable love, to represent Him as antecedently obliged to *reward* that work with the priceless blessings to descend on Christ's people. But his own *engagement* has not the less bound Him to this also, and as that engagement was connected with the work of Christ, we are right and have Scripture for regarding it as proximately the procuring cause of all.

"How full and rich the meaning which this view, and this alone, imparts to expressions such as these: 'The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin;' 'Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price;' 'Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, and present it to himself a glorious Church.' How deep and how rapturous the meaning this view, and it alone, sheds on the new song of the ransomed in heaven, 'Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God *by thy blood* out of

every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.' The old men observed in these things a fine grouping, which gave to their writings a beauty and unction now little found. Thus they viewed the death of the surety as containing within itself all that shall accrue to the elect man to the end, though constantly teaching that the atonement itself springs from the ancient decree, as a mean toward an end. All is from that decree, but all is also through Christ. Though the ancient decree be the real cause of all, the atonement is interposed and is the immediate cause. In the affairs of life, and in all sciences whatsoever, we never think of withholding the name of cause from the antecedent, because that antecedent is itself a consequent. The language of Scripture conforms to this rule, and the going on the contrary supposition, must give birth to forced interpretation and vicious exegesis to a great extent. Some Scriptures mention the beginning, middle, and end—namely, the decree, atonement, and fruits; others connect the fruits with the decree, making no mention of the atonement; others still deduce the fruits from the atonement, making no mention of the decree. In all three, grouping prevails.

“Perhaps, however, though this grouping is little present in the writings or discourses of those I am now opposing, and they are generally proportionately wanting in *sappiness*, we should wrong them were we to describe them as entirely differing from the old Calvinists in their view of the bearing of Christ's death on the elect. But if they do not thus differ, they *must* on their own principles maintain that his sacrifice has two entirely distinct aspects, and he has offered up two atonements—one to prove efficacious, the other to prove abortive. For, according to the principle that we are to

judge of the design by the result, we cannot say that Christ died even to secure the *possibility* of pardon for the mass of mankind, as, separated as that abstract possibility was to be from the bestowment of the faith and love which could alone render it available, it was in reality to turn out an *impossibility*. I think it is much more natural to suppose that our Lord had no regard (that is, as respects the proximate) to mankind at large in his atonement, than that he should have undertaken it only to secure for them a result such as this. And what, after all, is the advantage of this hypothesis of an abortive atonement? Does it represent God's love as greater? That cannot be, seeing He had no design of good in it. Does it, therefore, aid one at all in dealing with sinners as it has been supposed to do? 'Yes,' it will be replied, 'how can we call upon all to come to Christ unless there is provision in Christ for all? How can we say that God is willing to save, unless we know that He has provided salvation for all?' But *has* He provided salvation for all? For salvation, you yourselves allow the internal work of the Spirit is as necessary as the external work of Christ, and neither *was* that former provided for all, nor the latter *designed* to be available for all. The truth is, that we are never called on to make the false assertion that God is willing to save all in the present period (except in the sense that that would in itself be agreeable to His nature of love), or that Christ died to bring about this end; what we have to say is, that he died to secure and *has* secured the salvation of an elect number, and call upon each man to come to Christ in the appointed way, and by coming to him thus in genuine faith, *prove* that he is one of that elect number for whom provision is made; since

none can come to him unless the Father draw him, the Father will draw none but those for whom provision is made, and none, therefore, who cometh to Christ will he have to cast out. This is the way in which the old Calvinists spoke, and there is no appearance of their views having in the least impaired their zeal, freedom, or delight in preaching the gospel.

“On this hypothesis of an atonement not sufficient (proximately) for all, but yet for all who will avail themselves of it, we see the consistency of an universal offer with a limited provision. We do not say to each individual man, There is room at the gospel feast for all mankind; but we say, There is room for *you*, if you will come, wearing the wedding-garment. And thus we see how, whatever blame is to be attached to staying away remains the same on this hypothesis as on the other. There is an opinion, however, founded on a misinterpretation of certain texts of Scripture, particularly John iii. 18, which, though, as the above remarks may shew, standing in no logical connexion with that of an universal atonement, has practically much favoured it. It is this, that the great condemnation which awaits sinners at the last day will be on the *ground* of their not trusting in the merits of Christ. There are such great difficulties on the side of fact and of revelation itself in the way of this belief, it is surprising it should have been so hastily and with such confidence assumed to be the meaning of Scripture. In the first place, it is utterly impossible that this should be the ground of condemnation to those millions upon millions of the human race who have never heard of Christ; and yet it is nowhere said that the rule by which they shall be judged is of a different nature from that applied to the hearers of the gospel.

“ 2d, It is repeatedly declared, that men's *works* are to form the standard by which they are to be judged. ‘ Every tree that bringeth not forth *good fruit* is hewn down, and cast into the fire.’ ‘ He that knoweth his master's will, and *doeth it not*, shall be beaten with many stripes.’ ‘ God will render to every man *according to his deeds*.’ And after enumerating various vices, the Apostle Paul to the Colossians says, ‘ For *which things*’ sake the wrath of God cometh.’ Without entering into a minute analysis of that text in John, it may be remarked, that (1) unbelief may often proceed from perversion of the moral nature, men loving darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. And (2), if a man lay not hold on Christ's righteousness by faith, he must stand at the bar resting on his own merits; and these affording no plea, he must take the consequences of his sins, for which sins it is that properly he is punished.

“ The question will very naturally arise, seeing this comparatively new doctrine of a general atonement, combined with particular redemption, leaves unremoved all the old difficulties of Calvinism, and also introduces new difficulties of its own, How is it it has obtained a footing in our churches, and is so much spreading? Is it not because there is a class of texts which seem clearly to point out, in the death of Christ, a reference to all mankind? Some of these we will soon particularly examine. Meanwhile, I would point out the only two hypotheses on which, on Calvinistic principles, they can be understood. 1st, If Christ died for all mankind, it was that all should benefit from his death: all do not benefit from his death, therefore he did not die for all; and we must understand the texts referred to as describing a limited and not an unlimited totality. Or 2d, If Christ died

for all, it was that all should benefit from his death. Christ is described in Scripture as dying for all mankind, clearly in an unlimited sense; therefore, all mankind must *eventually* benefit from his death. It is needless to say that it is this last hypothesis which Calvinistic Universalists embrace. The thing may be figured by two concentric circles—Christ is the common centre; in the inner circle are the elect, in the outer the remainder.

“The distinction between the two things is clearly seen, by comparing Matt. xx. 28 and Mark x. 45 with 1 Tim. ii. 6. In the two first texts Christ tells his disciples that he came to give his life as a ransom for many; in the last he is said to have given himself as a ransom for all. The two propositions are as harmonious as they are distinct. That the ransom is intended for all, and accordingly does benefit all in the end, is no argument against a limited number being peculiarly favoured in the meantime; and the fact that, in the proximate, conversion and salvation are limited in extent, is no proof that eventually they do not embrace all.

“We have no right to require that the two truths, supposing them such, should always, or often, or at all, appear side by side in Sacred Writ. It is not for us to say what plan is suitable in making a revelation, what mixture of obscurity there should or should not be, or how far readers should be left to make up a body of doctrine by gathering into one the materials scattered up and down. That we must proceed in this manner in relation to theological truth generally, is admitted on all hands. It is nothing surprising, then, that the all-embracing propitiation, ransom, or salvation, is sometimes mentioned, with nothing said about the part-

embracing, and that very frequently we meet with the converse. It is natural to expect, that what immediately concerns us, the proximate, should be oftenest dwelt on; and the silence observed concerning the ultimate in ever so many places counts for nothing, if it be mentioned at all. In fact, its mention occurs in not a few places.

“To escape from those texts of this description which are already known, one of the expedients adopted is to maintain that, in the New Testament, you find *all* used for *many*, and *many* for *all*. *Primâ facie*, this is extremely improbable; and we do not find it to be taught by the scholars who have laboured on the classics. In their case theological bias does not operate. Of the texts alleged in proof, part are at once disposed of by the admission of Universalism and the natural sense of words, and the rest by a little critical labour. Sometimes the two words are fitly applied in succession to the same persons, as when we say, *That short reign produced many poets, all of them indifferent*. That passages of this sort occur in our books, is never thought a proof that *all* and *many* are commutable in English.

“When pressed on this subject, Eternists sometimes adduce texts which mention limited, perhaps extremely limited, totalities of persons; but nothing can be more irrelevant. After some description of persons has been mentioned, or the reader introduced to a particular time and place, and set of circumstances—things which of themselves restrict the totality—we are told something concerning *all*. Now, in such places Eternist commentators never wish to persuade us that this something applies only to *many* of the totality thus defined to the mind. In the example given above, in which we may

suppose the totality to embrace less than twenty persons, no one would interpret the words as if *many*, not *all*, of the poets were indifferent. Now, by the account of Eternists themselves, there are texts wherein the topic is salvation, or what leads to it, and the persons apparently the human race; and all we ask is, that the same principle should be applied to these texts, that *many* should not be substituted for *all*. If some hold that a totality less than the human race is in fact spoken of, or that there is ground for interpreting of a part only what has the appearance of regarding the whole, it is reasonable to require that strict proof, on sound philological and other principles, be given of a proposition not favoured by the natural use of words.

"Texts are also adduced to prove that *all* is not always strictly used so as to exclude exceptions. Not improbably some of those concerned, from sickness or bare indolence, did not go to be written down (Luke ii. 3); and so in some other cases. We use *all* in a loose way in matters of human life, when it is not in our power, nor of much consequence, to be perfectly exact; but loose statements are always avoided when the truth is fully known, and exactness of great moment. The extent of salvation is a very serious subject; and we must suppose that the Author of Scripture, whose knowledge of the issue was perfect, has given an account of it exact to the letter.

"In my next, dear William, I shall give you the Omnist texts I have long promised.—Yours ever,

"F. SOMERS.

"P.S.—By the bye, I have never told you the name which Elizabeth and I have resolved to give to our

scheme of Omnism. Our scheme I call it ; for though we cherish the hope of one day meeting face to face Elizabeth's revered *Unknown*, in the meantime we are the completely insulated living representatives of the system. The propounder of a new view is at liberty to choose a distinctive appellation for it, and I have always been of opinion that technical, strictly limited, terms contribute much to clearness of thought. The term 'revival,' like so many others, is variously applied already in current language ; we therefore propose to substitute for it 'redivival,' which you will at once perceive to be taken from the Latin *redivivus*, confining the term, of course, to the revival of existence.

" F. S."

CHAPTER XII.

OMNIST PASSAGES.

Mr Somers to Mr Merton.

"THE passage to which it seems most natural first to refer, is that already adverted to, 1 John ii. 1, 2; which reads thus in our present version—'My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.'

"The first remark I have to make is, that on the supposition of its being a fact that Christ had offered up an atonement designed to be efficient for all, this fact could not have been more clearly expressed than in the preceding words. Whether we consider the concluding words by themselves, or in their connexion, the most natural meaning to assign to them is, that Christ is the propitiation for the sins, not of believers only, but of all mankind. This very clear Universalist sense has, of course, been lost in the various interpretations the text has received. Of these, the one most commonly adopted, I believe, by Calvinists, is this:—John, as a Jew, classes himself at first with the believers of his own nation, and says, 'Christ is a propitiation for the sins of us believing Jews, and not for ours only, but for those of believers

of all nations.* Now, there is a conclusive objection to this theory, that *ὅλος* (*holos*) is never used in Greek in a quantitative sense, but to mean strictly the whole, all, including every part.† There is no authority whatever, in writings sacred or secular, for its meaning *part* out of every part, as the interpretation in question makes it to mean—some men out of every nation. Neither has any scholar ever asserted that it may, as *πᾶς* (*pās*) occasionally does, signify *of all sorts*. Thus, whatever class is designated here by *κοσμος* (*kosmos*), world, the term *ὅλος* shews that the whole of that *kosmos* must be included in the predication. Besides this philological one, there are other objections to this theory. When the apostle says, ‘If any man sin, we have an advocate,’ &c., the truth being general, we must understand him as including in the *we*, Christians of all nations, whether Jew or Gentile. Is it likely, then, that he should afterwards recur to a distinction so little relevant here, especially as there is no reason to think he was addressing Jews, and say, ‘Who is the propitiation for the sins of us Jews,’ &c.? Whether or not it were admissible on philological grounds to make the *our* here less extensive than the *we*, rules of *taste* would condemn it.

“Another explanation is, that St John here, in the *we* and the *our*, includes only himself and the church he is addressing; and his words are equivalent to this, ‘Christ is not only the propitiation for the sins of us, a limited number of individuals, but for those of the whole elect world.’ Now, there is no philological difficulty here; for *κοσμος* (*kosmos*) is often used in Scripture, and in the classics, to designate a narrower circle than the

* Hill, vol. ii., p. 169.

† Robinson's Greek and English Lexicon of the New Testament.

human race. But still, with all deference to those who have felt satisfied with this interpretation, I cannot assign to it any other epithet than childish. The idea that the Saviour should have offered himself up in sacrifice for a small circle of individuals, such as those addressed, was too absurd to have been expressed by an inspired pen, even for subsequent contradiction.

"The only alternative is the Omnist one, unless, indeed, we return to the idea of an indefinite atonement, here the more inappropriate, as, from the mention of Christ's advocacy with the Father, and the comfort to be drawn from it, the idea of *efficiency* as well as *sufficiency*, is so pressed home upon us.

"It may be objected, that, as St John here is only writing for believers, it would be irrelevant to bring forward the eventual benefit which even the impenitent will derive from his death. But let it be observed that, while the fact that Christ's atonement was intended for *all* believers was known by every one who knew of the atonement at all, and, therefore, it was needless to mention it, and the circumstance that these believers were of the Gentiles, as well as of the Jews, however interesting, was not here exactly relevant—this fact of the ultimate salvation of all, tended so highly to demonstrate the value of the atonement itself, it is quite in place to refer to it. If this propitiation was to benefit, finally, even the ungodly, how much more might the righteous trust to its efficacy?

"2 Pet. ii. 1.—'But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.'

“The celebrated Witsius (on the Covenants, vol. i., p. 234, *et seq.*, of Cruikshank’s translation) writes well on the subject of the efficacy of Christ’s satisfaction—‘The efficacy of Christ’s satisfaction is twofold: the first regards Christ himself, the other the elect. Christ by his satisfaction obtained for himself, as Mediator, a right to all the elect.’ Though the efficacy of his sacrifice is thus viewed at different times in different aspects, each involves the other. Christ, in redeeming us from the penalty of the law, by paying it for us, and thus purchasing for us liberty, buys us also to himself to be his own, his peculiar people, his inheritance, his purchased possession. In both cases purchase supposes not a possibility, but an actuality of possession; and, as Witsius remarks, it is ‘neither customary nor equitable’ that any other should be the result. Now, if this be true as respects the proximate, it must equally apply to what lies beyond it. If, then, we read, as in this passage of Peter, of certain persons who plainly are not, in this life, among the peculiar people of Christ, that still they have been *bought* by him, the inference is clear that eventually they too will form a part of his people. Now, the conduct of the persons spoken of involves aggravated guilt, in which light it is always exhibited in Scripture. Even if, as candour requires, we somewhat reduce the vehemence of expression, and speak of the offenders as *stealthily introducing destructive tenets*, we leave them open to severe blame, and their end is destruction—*i. e.*, chastisement and extinction. If, then, these individuals have been bought by Christ, and are, therefore, subsequently to benefit from his death—namely, by the grant of redivival—we cannot suppose that any of the rest of mankind will fail to obtain the same.

"It has been endeavoured to intercept the inference deducible from the word *bought* in the text before us as follows:—We are told of the teachers censured, that 'Avowing belief in the atoning death of Christ—glorying in that as the foundation of their hopes—and labouring to inculcate it upon the faith of others—they did, at the same time, so mix it up with gross and damning errors, and were so disobedient to the will of Christ, whom all the while they affected to follow as teachers of his religion, that they are strongly said to have denied, to have dishonoured, to have rebelled against him whom they proclaimed as the Lord that had bought them with his blood.' *

"In characterising the persons in question as 'so disobedient to the will of Christ,' Dr Thomson may be understood to mean that their lives were openly bad; and Scott, in his commentary, considers them avowed Antinomians. Persons of such a stamp may set themselves up as the apologists of vice, or advocates of what is palpably at variance with Christianity; but the stealthy introduction of dangerous opinions—opinions so much the more dangerous that they may be cloaked under others of which we cannot dispute the truth or goodness—proceeds from a different quarter, from plausible men of decent life. Accordingly the text says not a word about profligacy or open vice.

"Another thing has been seen in all ages. When a man has no love for the pure, pride-confounding doctrines of the gospel, nobody can tell what he may or may not land in, if there be nothing external to himself to be a drag on his descent. One doctrine after another is

* "The Doctrine of Universal Pardon Considered and Refuted," by the late Dr Andrew Thomson of Edinburgh, second edition, p. 142.

heaved overboard or enervated—one fancy after another interwoven in his system—till his theology becomes a chaos and a *caput mortuum*. Under some circumstances, he proceeds to renounce Christianity itself.

“The persons in question, then, may be concluded to have introduced false doctrine in one stage of their progress, and in the next to have denied Christ and Christianity altogether. Some translators seem to have half perceived this; and the original perfectly admits of a rendering that would make the thing clear. In this way, instead of ascribing a vehement meaning to denying, or rather to the Greek word it represents, we may take it in either of two usual and moderate senses. It is either a case of *denying*, and parallel to 1 John ii. 22, 23, or else of *disowning*, and parallel to Peter’s conduct, Luke xxii. 57.

“Of these, the former is for several reasons the more probable; but some may prefer the latter. If it be espoused, it affords the appearance of an escape from the word *bought*. Those false teachers, it may be said, end their career by recanting the very thing they still believed. Under the influence of fear, or some other worldly consideration, they disown him whom in their hearts they consider the Lord that bought them. It might be rash to declare that the language *could* not admit of this interpretation, but assuredly it is one in itself so extremely unlikely, that it would require a very hard pressure of difficulty on the other side to make one resort to it. Now, if there is no text can be found to prove the Universalist theory impossible, and if, on the other hand, one single text can be named, such as 1 John i. 2, which is utterly inexplicable but on Universalist principles, no such difficulty can be pleaded.

"1 Tim. iv. 10.—'For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.'

"There being no room for doubt as to the persons referred to here, the only question is, In what relation is God described as standing towards them? Some non-Universalists would retain for *Σωτηρ* (*Soter*) the meaning of Saviour, but give the term a very feeble import. They understand it as merely denoting that God is willing to enter with all men into the relation of a Saviour. Now, besides that this weakens the force of the original in a manner uncalled for, and not to be defended, the sense it yields is inconsistent with fact. It would come to this: God is willing to save all, whether they believe or not, but He is specially willing to save those who believe. But the fact is, whether the will of God to save precede or follow the possession of faith by the creature, this will or willingness on His part cannot be disjoined from faith on the part of the creature. It is His pleasure to save none *but* those who believe.

"On the Universalist hypothesis we may understand the words in their natural sense, as describing not a possible, but an actual, relation between God and His creatures. God is the Saviour of all, because He will bring all finally to bliss; He is specially the Saviour of believers, because He brings them earlier into union with Himself, and exempts them from what the others will undergo in the meanwhile.

"Others have suggested, in agreement with an established meaning of the word, its being here understood in the sense of Preserver. Supposing this to be the right translation, the word in this sense, as occurring in other

writings, has shades, each of which I shall briefly advert to.

“ Scott represents the apostle as grounding his perseverance in gospel labour on the truth that God is the Preserver of all men, in respect of their lives and temporal concerns, and will, therefore, take special care of believers. The objection to this is, that the faithful, far from enjoying a pre-eminence in this respect, have, in general, more temporal trials than others; and, in many cases, pay the penalty of fortune, liberty, country, limb, or life, for their fidelity to the truth. Secondly, While it is a truth that *so long as* a creature exists, it is upheld in that existence by God, there is in this no ground of confidence or repose of mind, as it does not secure any continuance of existence, nor any exhibition of favour; nor are the faithful upheld more than others.

“ Thus, if we keep to the meaning of Preserver, we have no resource but in a third sense of the word, apply it to God as a *Perpetuator*, as bestowing on all a perpetuity of existence. This would at once condemn the doctrine of final destruction, according to which God does not preserve all in being; and that of Eternism, which, representing all intelligences as having already entered on an eternal existence, precludes His being, in a special manner, the Preserver of the elect. It is unnecessary to point out, that, in the redivivalist hypothesis, the rendering of *Preserver* would give an excellent meaning. Thus, whichever translation we adopt, we are brought round to Omnism.

“ 1 Tim. ii. 3-7.—‘ For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between

God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher and an apostle.'

"This whole passage is decidedly Omnist; but verse 4 is so in a form different from what it now seems to bear. The words, *πάντας ἀνθρώπους* (*pantas anthrōpōūs*), should be rendered *the rest of mankind*, in which sense Hermann takes them in a passage of Herodotus he has occasion to consider. See his edition of Viger, p. 727.

"As the remainder completes or makes up the whole, it is not unnatural, considering how apt words are to suffer deflection, that the term expressive of *all* should occasionally mean *the rest*, a thing accordingly to be seen in many languages. According to the 'Imperial Dictionary,' our *complement* sometimes denotes the whole, sometimes the remainder, or what is required for totality. In logic, it is used in the former sense; in the science of quantity, in the latter. Some years ago there was a cricket match—*Yorkshire against all England*; that is, *the rest of England*. For a long time the Spaniards suffered so severely from our superiority at sea, that the wish for peace with us produced the common saying, *Con toda la tierra la guerra, y paz con Inghilterra*—War with the whole world (England excepted), and peace with England. Boiste notices this sense of *tout*, rendering it by *le reste*; and in the 'Semeur' for 1847, p. 290, we read, *Les vices des têtes couronnées sont jugés comme ceux de tout le monde*—Men pass the same judgment on the vices of crowned heads as on those of *other* people—fundamentally, *of the whole world, of everybody*. In German, this sense of *all*, *aller*, &c., though perhaps noted in no dictionary, is far from rare; but we never find *ganz* so used. In Greek, in like manner, the thing

applies to *πας* (*pās*), but not to *ἅπας* (*hapas*). Towards the beginning of his treatise on old age, Cicero expresses his conviction that Atticus bore with fortitude that evil, *sicut omnia*, as he did *all, all other* ones. With regard to the Hebrew *kol*, this sense is recognised in Job xxiv. 24, in our authorised version and most others, and by Gesenius. In many versions of Lev. iv. 7, 18, we find *the remainder* or *all the remainder of the blood*; though were we, with our common version, to go by the original force of terms in the Hebrew and Septuagint, we should make it, *all the blood*.

"Greek lexicography is imperfect under this head, but some notices are producible. In Valpy's additions to Stephanus, *πās* (*pās*), p. 7, 223, the thing is stated; and on the high authority of Valkenaer Schleusner, under the word, cites various instances, of which 1 Thess. ii. 15; iii. 12; v. 15, admit of no dispute. Of the many other passages in which we must render by *the rest, the remainder, the others, others, or other*, let one suffice. In Luke xxi. 29, we find the words *πάντα τὰ δένδρα* (*panta ta dendra*); and the common version is, *Behold the fig-tree and all the trees*. The subject being the getting into leaf, so as to denote the near approach of summer, we have first to deduct the fig itself, then evergreens; lastly, such deciduous trees as are early in leaf. Hence there is fault to find even with the version of Dr Campbell of Aberdeen—and *the other trees*. It is necessary to give the article a special force by no means uncommon, and render *other such trees*.

"That the application of this idiom is not to be dispensed with in 1 Tim. ii. 4, appears from a circumstance not of the less consequence because it has attracted no notice.

“If the salvation here spoken of were that from the wrath to come, the infallible correctness of Scripture diction would have required its being mentioned *after* the coming to the knowledge of the truth. It must, therefore, refer to that restoration to being, which, in the case of the majority, is to precede this last-named blessing. To restore, or recover, from any evil, is an acknowledged sense of the Greek word here employed. Now, as there is a portion of mankind who do not require to be thus restored, *πᾶντας* (*pantas*) here must describe not *all*, but the *remainder* of men; the favoured number being presupposed as excluded. When this verse is thus cleared up, a distinct light is thrown on the succeeding ones. This consummation, awaiting all, connects naturally and well with the fact of all having one common God, one common Mediator; and the express declaration, that *He* gave himself a ransom for all, comes in beautifully to crown the whole. To understand this *all* as a restricted totality after the mention of the one God, who surely belongs to all in the widest sense, and the one Mediator, who is described as coming between God and man, would indeed be to outrage taste by a lamentable bathos.

“John xii. 31, 32.—‘Now’ is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.’

“I wish to take these two verses in connexion, for, according to my view, they were closely connected as uttered by our Lord. I have, in writing these notes, generally avoided any private emendation in the translation, as undesirably, for the present purpose, complicating matters. I would, on the present occasion, however,

suggest a slight alteration which gives a coherence to the passage that now it wants. I would render ver. 31, Condemnation to this world proceedeth for the present, but, &c.

“I shall begin by giving you the state of the case as it appears to me, in a sort of commentary on these two verses, bearing in mind the order of time. Satan is here called the prince of this world, that is, the ruler of this period, in which, alas! we have daily and hourly proofs of his power to this day. The casting out a ruler, means the putting an end to his dominion. This, in the case of Satan, is not finally accomplished till, as related Rev. xx. 8-10, the rebels styled Gog and Magog, whom he stirs up, are destroyed, and he himself consigned to life-long punishment. The last of the race of Adam have been by this time born; the elect have all been effectually called; and, simultaneously with the doom of Satan, those of them in life will all attain to that purification from sin which Scripture always holds out to the people of God as a thing to be ardently coveted. Obstruction on the part of Satan is now at an end, after which the remainder of the prediction is accomplished by the rediival, in due time, of the lost, and whatever else is required in order to Christ's drawing all to himself.

“What are we, on Eternist principles, to accept in lieu of this explanation? In the first place, as to the casting out, some have thought that it refers to the deliverance in this world of believers in Christ from the dominion of sin and Satan; but this is so very partial a victory, it does not by any means justify the strong terms employed. Others have referred it rightly to the final judgment on Satan, but have included in it the condemnation of the wicked. Now, the notions usually

entertained on this subject are of that description, that they scarcely seem to allow of our considering Satan's kingdom as ever properly overthrown, for the sufferers in hell are regarded as continuing to all eternity his captives and victims.

"Turning now to the second verse, if we take the 'drawing,' as some have done, to mean the possession of a kind of attractiveness or fittedness to draw,* or if we understand by it that 'common grace' which Arminians hold to have been obtained by Christ for all mankind; in either case, seeing both one and the other may leave mankind as truly the slaves of Satan as before, can the prince of this world be said with any propriety to be cast out?

"Rejecting, therefore, as inadequate, both these supposed senses of the term, I assign to the 'drawing' here spoken of the same meaning, or nearly the same, as in chap. vi. 44 of the same evangelist, where Christ says, 'No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him.' Whether, in the verse under consideration, the meaning is, that Christ will draw those spoken of to moral similitude to himself, or to where he is in glory, or draw them in both senses (about which expositors differ), does not concern our argument.

"With regard to what is correctly rendered *all men*, the original has no noun nor article, being simply *παντας* (*pantas*), the accusative plural masculine. Tholuck is silent on the extent in which the word is to be under-

* This would make our Lord's speech not a prediction, but a mere assertion, amounting to this, If I die, my death will be fitted to attract all to me—an assertion (I say it with reverence) little betraying the force and dignity of his usual discourse. And this attractiveness will, at any rate, be entirely lost on those countless millions who will have died without the most distant rumour reaching them of his death.

stood. The late highly-esteemed Olshausen justly remarks, that it cannot mean the called (elect), as any limitation of the totality would have required the article to be present. He then goes on, with something like *naïveté*, to this effect:—‘Perhaps we may escape from Universalism by saying that it denotes Gentiles as well as Jews; but the remark is far from sufficient, and this must be reckoned among the texts in which there is a very strong *appearance* of the doctrine.’

“Among ourselves, the escape just mentioned has always been the favourite one. It stays itself on the fact, that occasionally the original word means *of every sort*; but it has not occurred to the advocates of this interpretation, that, in order to its having this meaning, it must be combined with a noun or participle expressed, and that there must be something in this accompaniment, and in the circumstances, to favour this particular deviation from the ordinary sense. Hence, in none of the five lexicons of the New Testament consulted on this point, is this numbered among the places where the sense in question is applicable; and it may be doubted whether it has ever been so translated. Of translations into various languages I have examined on this passage, about twenty in number, there is not one but renders the word by *all*.

“Rom. v. 18, 19.—‘Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.’

“Of all the books of the New Testament, the Romans has been most discussed; of all its chapters, the fifth; and

in that chapter debate has mainly turned on the ten concluding verses of the one-and-twenty comprised in it. Many new translations of the epistle have been given, particularly in Germany; and were we to separate and collect together what has been published on the ten verses named, it would form many volumes. Many persons, much esteemed for learning and strength of faculties, have devoted their whole powers, with zeal and perseverance, to the removal of difficulties; and yet the subject remains about as obscure as ever.

“The inquiry arises whether this unsatisfactory result of labours, carried on during so many centuries, is not to be accounted for by restricted views of truth on the part of the labourers. The knowledge of things and that of words or language (*sachkenntniss* and *wortkenntniss* of the Germans) are, as it were, two feet whereby we advance in the knowledge of a book. It is sometimes by means of the first, and sometimes of the last, that we explore the unknown; but it is clear that if the one lags behind, the other can make no great advance. To change the figure, it required the key of Universalism to open this celebrated passage of Sacred Writ. With its help, the difficulties of the two verses before us will, for the most part, be cleared up, though a full consideration of the subject, and the removal of the obscurity and other faults of the present translation, it would not suit my present purpose to attempt.

“Even as ver. 18 now stands, the great idea can be drawn from it, that, whereas by Adam’s transgression all mankind come under a sentence of condemnation, by the righteousness of Christ all receive a sentence of recovery—whether that recovery takes place in this aion or hereafter.

“ To avoid this Omnist sense, some have maintained that the two *alls* are not co-extensive. They acknowledge that the first totality is an unlimited one, but assert that the second is limited. It is scarcely necessary to say that no philological argument can be pleaded for this interpretation. It rests solely on the ground of the supposed fact, that the elect alone obtain a title to life. This, however, is reasoning in a circle. We must make use of this text, as of others, to learn whether the elect alone, or ‘all men,’ shall eventually obtain that privilege. Our present translation of ver. 19 has given some countenance to this error by the causal particle *for* with which it makes it begin, as if it rendered a reason for the truth of what precedes. We cannot argue from many, or any part, to the whole; therefore, in order to support this imagined connexion between the verses, we must reduce the two *alls* of ver. 18 to a co-extensiveness with the *manys* of ver. 19.

“ The fact is, however, that the drift and import of the two verses is perfectly distinct. Our present translation goes against all authority in rendering in the same sense *οἱ πολλοί* (*hoi polloi*), twice by *many*. Most commonly it means *the majority*, or else *the vulgar*. Sometimes it denotes a particular many or multitude, supposed to be known or knowable by what is said—a discriminated many. This is what we have in ver. 19. There, as Dr Hamilton has well observed, the two *manys* are not contrasted or compared together, but each severally with *the one*, its respective head, Adam or Christ. Hence he rightly would express the article in the translation as it is in the original—the one—the many. In one sense, indeed, as the one corresponds with another *one*, so the

one many corresponds with another many; and as in this verse each man seems to be described as in his final state (as regards this life)—whether in that of nature, as belonging to the old man Adam; or a state of grace, as belonging to the second man, Christ—the one many does not include the other, but they are perfectly uncoincident. Two *manys* need not be co-extensive, but two *alls* must be so, if they are expressive of strict totality; and the usage of the language requires them to be so viewed here, from the absence of the article before both the *παρτες*. The proof of co-extensiveness in the two *alls* depends not, however, on a philological admission; it is involved in the correspondence between our federal relationship to Adam and that to Christ, which last would be but an imperfect remedy for the former were it not co-extensive with it. Some will obtain this co-extensiveness to their own satisfaction by the consideration, that Christ is willing to rehead and raise all those who fall in Adam, and will bestow righteousness as well as justification on all who seek it from him. But this is a shallow mode of considering a question which lies deep in the purposes of God. It was by no choice of ours we became related to Adam, and we obtained from him something more than an opportunity of becoming sinful if we chose. We obtained a *sinful nature*—a doom taken in itself the more tremendous, because involving responsibility. That which some consider a relief and a reconciliation is really the most dreadful part of the punishment. It is our conscience and noble intellectual nature which renders the union between sin and guilt indissoluble in us, therefore we could only obtain irresponsibility by the sacrifice of all that exalts

us ; otherwise, if it were possible that sin should exist without responsibility,* it would be lightened of half, more than half its curse. We might suffer still and as acutely, but with our guilt we should lose our heaviest load. Of this more hereafter ; suffice it now to allow frankly that sin and righteousness, residing in the will, are *intrinsic* qualities, and involve responsibility and acquittal. But when we come to account for the sinfulness of the old nature and the righteousness of the new, we must for both alike seek a deeper and more certain foundation than the puny and capricious will of man. Though all other difficulties should be got over or set aside, the fundamental difficulty will still remain, how to escape from the conclusion, that the creation of man has been with the majority a failure—a lamentable failure, a frustration of almost all that we can suppose God could have designed in it, if we reject the all-harmonising doctrine of Universal restoration.

“1 Cor. xv. 22.—‘For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.’

“The preceding part of the chapter relates chiefly to the resurrection of Christ from the dead, but it does not follow from this, that, when the subject changes to the human race, the resurrection of the body is spoken of. Spiritual things are now introduced, by a transition less remarkable than many in Scripture, which, moreover, abundantly connects blessings of that nature with the resurrection of Christ. Were it in my power to enter on the subject fully, I might bring forward arguments to prove (and the opinion is by no means new) that many things which have been applied to corporeal resurrection in reality refer to that of the soul.

* And it is not impossible that it does so in the lower animals.

“Considering more particularly the text above cited, there is no dissent on either of two points—first, that the totality spoken of in the first clause is unlimited, and embraces the entire human race; secondly, that some loss was incurred by all of them through Adam. Now, grounding on the former of these settled points above alluded to, if the totality be unlimited in the one case, so must it be in the other—a conclusion which, supposing it not required by parallelism, follows from the principle stated by Olshausen on John xii. 32; for here, as there, there is in the original no article to limit the *all*. Supposing it intended to denote an unlimited totality in the first part of the verse and a limited in the second, the article would have been prefixed to the *παντες* (*pantes*), all, when it again occurs. Grounding on the latter settled point, there being a contrast between the things spoken of in the several clauses, and the first of these mentioning a loss incurred by all, we may conclude that the second relates to what is a gain to all.

“The expression ‘in Christ’ has also generally been understood, and there is in Scripture abundant support for the opinion, to give in itself the idea of a benefit to be derived from a relation to him. But if the resurrection here spoken of be one of the body, and if in the case of a large proportion of mankind this is to be the prelude only to final condemnation, how can it be shewn to be a gain to them?

“What, moreover, is the loss here spoken of? The death incurred through the medium of Adam is three-fold—spiritual, natural, final. By the first, we are born destitute of love to God; by the second, we are liable to the death of the body; by the third, unless grace interpose, we suffer the death of the soul—that is, extinc-

tion. It is the two first of these deaths that are universal, and of these the first is, taken in itself, inexpressibly the most important. It is not to be imagined, therefore, that Scripture should in this place have omitted a reference to this, to dwell exclusively on what, as compared with it, is of small moment—the death of the body. And just as the resurrection of the body is no gain to the unbeliever, so is the death of the body no loss to the believer, but in each case quite the reverse. We must, therefore, understand the dying and the making alive here spoken of as spiritual; and I have before proved it to be universal. Hence, we obtain the clear Omnist declaration, that ‘As in Adam all [mankind] [spiritually] die, so in Christ shall all [mankind] [spiritually] be made alive.’

“Heb. ii. 8.—‘For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him.’

“In these words, the first thing of a nature to mislead is the introductory *for*. Much false reasoning has been introduced into the common version by its so uniformly rendering the γὰρ (*gar*) of the original by *for*. The words cited afford no reason for the truth of what precedes, which is a citation from the eighth psalm, and states of the Messiah, that, though humiliated for a while, he will be made Lord of all. The past tense is here used for the future.

“Secondly, The present version is a perfect truism, such a thing as we never find in a work of the least merit. It amounts to this, that, if the subjection be total, there is no exception to it. I therefore propose another rendering.

“The first αὐτῷ (*autō*) being wanting in the Vatican manuscript, we may render as follows:—*In thus reducing*

the whole, he will leave none unreduced in mind. The apostle thus teaches us in what sense we are to understand the Psalmist, when he says that the totality is to be put under the feet of Christ. The subjection intended is an inward one, that of the mind and heart, as well as an outward.* In vindication of the translation of the second or only genuine *αὐτῶ, autō* (which is emphatically placed), by *in mind*, I must refer you to Passow, from whose citations we see that *αὐτὸς (autos)* is employed to designate, in any combination of things or persons, the more prominent or distinguished. This use, which is very diversified, is far from uncommon. You know the *αὐτὸς ἔφη (autos ephē)*, the master has said, it is the teacher's opinion. In the case before us the heart is the man, the main thing; and any subjection that does not reach it is but imperfect.

'Who overcomes

By force hath overcome but half his foe.' †

"Some persons, while admitting the translation given, may still maintain that the totality spoken of is only the elect. But the Psalmist speaks of the Messiah being set over the works of God's hands, to which we must suppose the totality to refer. Now the non-elect, equally with the elect, are included in this description.

"As to the use of the neuter gender in the original, it is well known that in Greek it is often used when animated, or even rational, beings are the subject of discourse. The whole drift of the passage and its context (Heb. ii. 6-9) shews that the highest part of the creation and the highest things are spoken of. In frequent cases we misinterpret Scripture, from taking it to treat of

* The like applies to 1 Cor. xv. 24-26, where a great similarity of phraseology will be remarked.

† Milton.

lower things than it is to be supposed that it condescends to notice, at least in the places in question. For instance, no one who has obtained light on the question of the salvation of all will doubt that, in Heb. i. 2, it is meant to describe Christ as the inheritor of all persons, not all things. The word is either masculine or neuter.

“ Besides the above texts in favour of Universalism, the authorised version to which, under this head, I have thought it best, as far as possible, to confine myself, contains others from which it might be elicited; but for the present I confine myself to these, as I believe, the principal texts.”

CHAPTER XIII.

DESTRUCTION THE END OF THE WICKED—REDIVIVALISM
 A NECESSARY THEORY—GOD'S WRATH AND MERCY
 —THEORY OF NON-INFINITUDE.

Mr Merton to Mr Somers.

"DEAR FREDERIC,—You bade me not to reply to you till I had received your three letters. Your strictures on Dr Payne and his school I deem highly valuable and important. I never had adopted his views; but my dear wife had something of a leaning towards them, and I have been glad to go over with her your able exposition of their errors. Thank you also for your Omnist texts and commentaries, some of which appear to me to have much force. But, my dear friend, you must allow me still to retain a considerable amount of doubt on that point. It seems to me still incomprehensible that, if such really were the mind of God, He should not have declared it in less unmistakeable language. The argument for destruction appears to me far stronger. For it, I now see, we have the clearest Scripture proof; and the objections urged by Eternists against this view can be, I think, most satisfactorily disposed of. But, besides that the doctrine of Redivival, though it no longer appears to me utterly untenable and incomprehensible, is certainly a difficult one to get over, there are a class

of texts which at present seem to me unmistakeably to contradict it. I do not insist so much on such as these: 'Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation;' 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' But what do you make of such passages as these?—'He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall be suddenly removed and that without remedy;' 'He that is unjust, let him be unjust still,' &c.; 'Whose *end* is destruction.' Or, again, of those which speak of the relentlessness of God's wrath, such as, 'As I cried and they would not hear, so they cried and I would not hear, saith the Lord of Hosts.' How can we understand the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, but as teaching the eternal banishment of the impenitent from heaven?—'Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence.' Of the sin against the Holy Ghost, it is declared, in one place, that 'it shall never be forgiven;' in another, 'it shall not be forgiven, either in this world or in that which is to come.' Respecting Judas, too, how could our Lord be justified in saying, that it had been better for him never to have been born, if a happy eternity was finally to be his?

"While I am, as I fear you will say, so stubborn in my resistance to Omnism, our friend Sophia Milwood, who shares all your letters, is taking it in with avidity. She says, now she has learned to consult her heart and conscience in the matter, she finds they give the most undoubting verdict in favour of the doctrine; and your Omnist texts are to *her* most convincing. On the other hand, she shrinks from Destructionism, and cannot see its compatability with eventual happiness."

Mr Somers to Mr Merton.

"DEAR WILLIAM,—I rejoice to find you thoroughly closing with Destructionism. Even if you rest there, it is an immense advance on Eternism; and, intellectually, I consider it a better foundation for the whole system of Redivivalism than Omnism itself. But, viewing it *only* as the foundation, I earnestly wish you should build on it the completed doctrine. I cannot at all agree with you as to the nature of the evidence necessary to prove a Scripture doctrine. With regard to those fundamental truths which are essential to salvation, Revelation treats us all like children, and delivers them to us in a form to suit the least reasoning mind. But, indeed, I cannot say it is less so with the separate *elements* of Redivivalism—but they are not perhaps put together. How unreasonable, however, that those who have been content to *construct* the greater part of their theology hitherto out of truths given them in this separated form, should be discontented now when a truth, which confessedly relates more to the ultimate than the proximate, is offered them in this unsystematic shape! To revert to the analogy of inductive science to which we have so frequently referred, the only proofs on which the *laws* of science rest in the minds of the natural philosopher, is that they, and they alone, serve to explain certain phenomena in the physical world; and yet these laws may be held by these reasoners as equally true with the mere sensations which gave rise to them. Now, in like manner, if we have a set of texts which speak of the extinction of the soul as the lot of all the unrenewed; and another which speak of a final benefit to all, to be obtained through Christ, a life and a salvation which he is

to dispense; and if the hypothesis of a revival of being be the only conceivable one which shall reconcile these several truths—I think it is consistent with, and indeed required by the calmest and most philosophic reasoning, that we embrace this hypothesis as itself an undoubted truth, even though we should find no single text which individually embodies it. According to the principle which I have so frequently insisted on, that the knowledge of things is necessary to direct and render available the knowledge of words, it is not, in my view, surprising that our translators should have, at times, missed an Omnist or even a Redivivalist rendering of texts, which, to one possessed of these truths, had not unfrequently been obvious. I do not know that I could point to a single passage where they have hit on this last, but that in Psalm xc.—‘Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.’ But we may possibly see it hinted in that remarkable saying of the woman of Tekoa (2 Sam. xiv. 14)—‘For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again: neither doth God respect any person; yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him.’

“I do not deny that it would have been gratifying to all interested in the subject, if there had been any one text which unequivocally stated Redivivalism; but I do deny that we are in the right road or the right mood for truth, if we *require* this self-dictated satisfaction in order to receive it. I have often thought it a very natural feeling to have arisen in the heart of an ardent champion on either side of the much controverted points of the simple gospel truth, ‘Would that the mind of God in this matter had been *so* declared, that adversaries professing to

bow to its authority had not *dared* to dispute its meaning!' But, in our quiet judgment, we cannot suppose it would have been better if God had acted on this plan, and, from the manner in which it has fared with the doctrine of Christ's expiatory sacrifice, we may even see how it might not have answered. This last-named doctrine is enunciated in such a manner in Scripture, that to us who receive it, it is a matter of the utmost surprise that any respector of revelation can deny its presence there. Yet, so it is; and so it might have been with those other doctrines to which we cling.

"You would rightly, however, consider it a fatal objection to this doctrine, if there were any Scripture proof of an opposite tendency, and I proceed now to examine that which you adduce. Let me just devote a few words to those texts on which you say you will not insist, but on which many Eternists do. That gigantic error of eternal misery, as it seems to me, like a blazing fire, so blind men's eyes, that, after dwelling on it, they cannot for a time view the truth itself in its real aspect. The solemn, fearful, wrath of God, such as Omnism itself represents it, against unrepentant offenders, because it is not eternal, appears to them trifling and insignificant. But where more correct views are obtained, it will be felt that to be rescued from even this temporary doom is a *salvation* truly worthy of the name; and those who are received into favour and acceptance now—this side of a chasm, which all analogy, if not direct Scripture proof, compels us to believe, will extend over an incalculable lapse of time—may well be distinguished as an *accepted* people. Such texts, therefore, need present no difficulty. With reference to that passage, 'He that is unjust, let him be unjust still,' &c., which is taken

from Revelation, I would remark, that, while no portion of Sacred Writ should be neglected—and this, like all the rest, was intended to be understood in the end; and therefore, I honour those Christians who, feeling themselves called thereto by God, devote to it peculiar attention—yet even they, I think, must acknowledge that its *chronology* is a matter of most difficult ascertainment, and must remain so till some clearer light is thrown on this subject than has yet appeared. In the meantime, it would be dangerous to found any argument for the fixity of the moral state of the unrenewed on a text such as you quote.

“You refer me, however, to a very important and a pretty numerous class of texts which describe destruction as the *end* of an individual's career, and to another which speaks of the inevitableness of God's wrath against offenders. Now as to the first, if the end here spoken of be, indeed, strictly speaking, *the end*—a state to continue to all eternity—of course it precludes the idea of a recall into being. But is there any necessity so to view it? God, existing in eternity, views as the end of any being nothing short of the realisation of His true idea concerning it, that for which He from the first destined it, and which continues steady amidst all its vicissitudes. It is in this sense—so misunderstood and misapplied in later times—that the ancient philosophers spoke of ideas as the only realities. The meaning is neither recondite nor obscure. When we look at the frightful daubs which first proceed from the highest master's pencil, we must surely feel, that in a certain grand sense his inner *idea*, if we could reach that—which is vivid and steady in his mind all the time that he is working it out—has far more reality and completeness

than that which is beneath our eye. And so is it with man, the workmanship of God, in all His preparatory stages, as compared with that stable reality, the purpose in God's mind which is in the end to be completely realised. It was in this fine sense that Proclus declared, 'There is no idea but of good.' But, in condescension to our finite views, God often describes the closes of particular stages of being, and particular points in His own never-beginning, never-ending eternity, as ends. Our own common language admits of this ambiguity. Thus, in some passages of our Scriptures, the death even of the righteous man is termed his end. For instance, the Psalmist says, 'Make me to know mine end, and the number of my days.' How much more may the term be applied to the extinction of the soul of the wicked! As I observed in a paper which you read, while there is a higher unity which binds together the different stages of a being into one, each one of these stages forms also a distinct whole in itself, and, therefore, its close may most appropriately be styled an end.

"Respecting the other class of texts which you refer to, some of them relate to a wrath to befall the rebellious generally in their next stage of being; others, to one awaiting the Jewish nation in this: in both, the same principle of interpretation is applicable. Acceptors of revelation, even such as do not believe, as we both do, in the restoration of the Jews to their own land, cannot and do not doubt that a time of favour is reserved for them, when these natural branches, which were broken off because of unbelief, shall again be grafted on their own olive-tree. God's dealings with this nation furnish, indeed, the best commentary on His severity, wrath, and vengeance. He bore with them long; He sent them

warnings and threats, encouragements and promises; He often stretched out His hand to save them from their enemies; and His ears were open to their prayers. But they continued to rebel against Him, and the rejection and crucifixion of Christ filled up the measure of their iniquities. The time for mercy and forbearance had now expired, and the inevitable curse descended which still rests upon them as a nation. But this prevents not their future restoration when the time for favour again arrives.

“Now this is only one specimen of an opposition constantly recurring in Scripture between the time of mercy and the time of wrath. It is not that God’s character changes, nor His feelings; but, in consistence with the deep wisdom of His plans, His outward dealings vary with appropriate periods. First, He grants a time of probation, a time of repentance, pardon, and grace. Then He will be entreated; His ear is open to prayer. But this period is not unlimited. The time must come for Him to execute His threats. His enemies and those of the Church must be consigned to destruction, and then His justice is as inexorable as before His mercy was relenting. These two stages being practically the most important to man in his present existence, it is natural that revelation should, for the most part, concern itself with them; yet is there abundance of reference to what is beyond them both.

“You refer to the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, and especially to Abraham’s speech. I consider the drift of that passage to be the impossibility of passing from one of those states into the other, and by implication, of course, the impossibility of escape from the torment, and not its everlasting continuance. If the inhabitants of the pit continue in the flames till the destructive work

is done, and their present being ends, it matters not what becomes of them in their future stages; they cannot be said to pass *that* gulf. As illustrative of the real meaning here, I would refer you to those words of Christ, 'Whither I go, ye cannot come.' As first addressed to the reviling Jews (John vii. 34), this declaration might seem full of despair; but we find it repeated, and evidently in a similar sense, to his beloved disciples, 'Little children, ye shall seek me, and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you' (John xiii. 33). We know that as to them it only spoke a present bar, and might it not be the same as to the Jews?*

"Before closing, I must refer to a suggestion that was lately made to me by a friend, which is this: Granting that Redivivalism is discoverable from Scripture, it is so obscurely given that it may be a question whether it is right even for one who discovers it there to bring it prominently before the world. May not the reticence of Scripture be a hint towards continued reticence? I shall not urge against the course here advised, that it is *dangerous*, because, though dangerous, it might be correct. But I shall simply say, that it appears to me founded on a mistake. We know that 'all Scripture is profitable,' either for one purpose or for another. The fact of God's having kept this truth hitherto in the background is no argument whatever that He intends it so to continue. There is a sense, in every kingdom of truth, in which it appears to be 'the glory of God to conceal a thing;' but at the same time, it is 'the honour of men

* Frederic's replies to the objections drawn from the sin against the Holy Ghost and the case of Judas, are omitted here, as the substance of each will appear in another place.

to search it out.' I do not deny that, to a limited extent, man himself may judge as to the fitting times and opportunities for the delivery of truth, and that, far from being bound to give immediate publicity to all his convictions, he might sometimes, in effect, desecrate them by so doing. The only general rule that can be given is this: to look on truth as a sacred deposit, not for personal but public benefit, and to be guided by this consideration alike in its temporary withholdment and its seasonable promulgation. In the present instance, it must also not be forgotten that the choice rests not between utterance and simple reticence. How can we, by any possibility, hope to destroy the positive error of Eternism, but by offering something better in its place?

"That portion of one of my papers which, as you remind me, I omitted at the time, on the infinitude of punishment, I now send in a separate form.

"CAN SUFFERING BE ENDLESS AND FINITE?"

"It is one of the meritorious distinctions of our times, above, perhaps, any that have preceded them, that the claims of the moral sense, whether they be really complied with or not, are, at any rate, more respected. It is thus that moral objections, real or supposed, to various doctrines in our current theology, which once would have been met by dogmatic assertion regarding the authority of Scripture, are now increasingly encountered on their own appropriate ground—that of moral considerations. It is beginning to be practically felt, even though it should yet be little acknowledged, that the moral sense, no less than the intellectual faculties, was given us by the great Author of our being to help us to the right interpretation of His Word and will. The estimable John Foster—in this the spokesman of a large

class of intelligent and feeling minds—is the author of one of the most important of the objections above alluded to, in his celebrated ‘Moral Argument against the Eternity of Future Punishment, Founded on the Character of God.’ I have not his writings by me at present, and, though I had, should prefer stating the case somewhat differently. Eternal punishment is described as due to the justice of God; but it is essential to justice, that the penalty it inflicts should be in exact proportion to the crime it punishes. How, then, can it award to the sin of a finite being an endless, i. e., an infinite punishment? This objection has been replied to in various ways. Some would remove the alleged inconsistency between the penalty and the crime by denying the finiteness of the latter; others by denying the infinitude of the former. Of the first class is the elder President Edwards, who maintained, as multitudes since him have done, that the sin of man, though committed by a finite being, is infinite, because directed against an infinitely holy and loving God. Others, such as Dr Hamilton of Leeds, have satisfied their own minds and that of many others, by the supposition of an infinitely prolonged transgression demanding an endlessly protracted suffering. Of the second class there have been some of late years (I know not if the opinion dates further back) who would, with much ingenuity, but perhaps not equal soundness of argument, point out a distinction between an endless and an infinite punishment. It is this line of reasoning which I now purpose particularly to consider.

“To give greater definitiveness and point to my remarks, I shall bring them to bear on an article in the *British Quarterly Review* for February 1848, where the proposition alluded to is put forth with greater clearness,

fulness, and originality, than in any other place where I have met with it.

“The writer referred to endeavours to prove that ‘the question of the duration of punishment has no necessary connexion with its amount or its severity.’ He states the case thus: ‘Cannot that amount of suffering, which Mr White [author of “Life in Christ”] describes as so dreadful, be diffused through eternity without increasing it, as well as be concentrated in its burning torments within the compass of a century, or a millennium, or any definite period whatever. There must be a proportion between a definite amount of misery, limited by a definite period, and a smaller amount indefinitely prolonged. It is idle to say that the smallest amount of suffering indefinitely prolonged, must exceed the amount of the greatest suffering limited by time, because this excludes from the adjustment the indefinite postponement of a part of the suffering. With as good a show of argument, this proposition might be reversed, and it might be said, the amount must be diminished in the endless duration, because a part of the adjudicated suffering can never be endured. . . .

“‘In thus stating the case to an intelligent friend who had been sorely troubled with the “Moral Argument,”* we were somewhat surprised at his reply—“By spreading through eternity a finite amount of misery, adjudicated in proportion to the guilt of each individual, you so attenuate the suffering as to reduce it to a very light deduction from the enjoyment of everlasting existence.” If such a reply be suggested by the reader, there is, at all events, an end of the moral argument founded on the too great severity of endless suffering. We are not to

* Foster’s “Moral Argument” against the belief in eternal misery.

be charged with attributing both too much leniency and too much severity to the judgments of God. The question has no connexion whatever with either their leniency or their severity. . . . The great fallacy appears in the assumption, that misery is infinite because it is interminable, although nothing infinite can be predicted of a finite being. A spirit has not infinite perfections because, with its attributes indestructible, it will live for ever. . . . As soon as we allow gradations of misery, we concede the notion of its infinity, and make its proportions commensurate with a finite standard. . . . But confining our attention to the duration of an attribute, we observe that infinity of duration, ascribed to that which has a beginning, is a manifest contradiction in terms. Finite attributes can never grow into infinite. The beginning of the endless suffering is, and ever will be, the date from which the computation can be made. We have a line on which we can reckon, recede as we continually may from its terminus—a solid ground which we can fathom, rise as we continually may above its surface. The rule of the computation is the rule, not of infinity but of an infinite series of finite quantities, and is, therefore, computable in every possible number of the progression of its series. . . . We are not to be told that misery will become infinite, because it is endless, for at every point of the infinite series, it will be as far from infinity as from its termination. So much may suffice for the fallacy which confounds infinity with an interminable series of finite numbers, measurable in every point of their progression.'

"Now, first, I demur to the assertion, that 'infinity of duration ascribed to that which has a beginning, is a contradiction in terms.' Infinity, as in form, so in reality,

is a negative, not a positive term. It conveys no definite conception; it only removes a certain definite and positive one—that of limitation. This negation may be affirmed either absolutely or partially. *E.g.*, all body is trinally extended. We can conceive a certain object limited in two directions, but extending infinitely in the other. Limitation might then be partially denied of it. It would not fill the absolute infinite space, yet the space it would occupy would be infinite in this sense, that it never could be expressed by any finite quantity. And this would be the case though it were terminated at one end in the dimension in which it extends infinitely at the other. The same holds good as to time. It is not necessary that a period of infinite duration should be unlimited at *both* extremities. The duration of that which has had a beginning cannot at any given moment *have been* infinite; but if it is to have no end, it *will be* so. Infinitude is as predicable of a future as of a past eternity. In fact, they must be viewed as exactly corresponding. Of neither can we say, at any given moment, that addition is inconceivable. The period which *began* would have been infinitely longer had it begun an eternity before—that which never began, for instance the duration of the existence of God, will be infinitely greater an eternity hence. Of neither can we speak as of a conceivable whole,* because a whole is made up of parts which have a definite relation to it, whereas there is no relation between any portion of the

* This is not so palpable when applied to a past infinity. By taking a particular point in the present, we think we can speak of that as a whole and yet as infinite. The present tense shutting up the past, deludes us into the imagination of a positive idea, the past ever appearing to us more determinate than the future. But a very little reflection will convince us of the fallacy.

past or the future eternity and those eternities themselves. This is the characteristic of the infinite. We might, therefore, use the very argument the writer under review employs in denying 'that misery will become infinite because it is endless,' to prove that it must become so. 'At every point of the infinite series it will be as far from infinity as from its termination;' in other words, its termination is infinitely removed from any point we may fix on in its course; i.e., no portion of it has any relation to the whole. The fact that we cannot bring endless misery before our mind as a whole, in order to pronounce it infinite, does not prove that it is not infinite—it is a necessary condition for its being so. That which we *can* bring before us as a whole cannot be infinite. In all this we must speak of truth as contemplated by a finite mind. In discussions such as these, we must be careful of dogmatic assertions as to absolute truth, as it appears to God—because of the necessary limitation of our faculties.

"Endless punishment never being seizable, therefore, by the mind as a present whole, it is impossible to apply *computations* to it. When, therefore, it is said, 'The beginning of the endless suffering is, and ever will be, the date from which the computation can be made,' the writer forgets that, in supposing a computation, he in imagination imposes a limit on that unlimited future.

"The fact, then, that the endless suffering of the wicked would have a beginning, would not of itself make it finite. But we are met by another difficulty: it is said, 'As soon as we allow gradations of misery, we concede the notion of its infinity,' &c. Far from its being necessary, however, that all infinite quantities should equal one another in amount, mathematicians

have proved that there are certain infinite quantities infinitely smaller than certain other infinite quantities. Thus, the number of years that the eternal God has been in existence is at this moment infinite, yet it is infinitely less than the number of the years of His whole existence. We see, then, with respect to two infinite things which admit of measurement only in one dimension—equality even in that dimension is not necessary. But the objection rests on the assumption formerly combated, that unlimitedness in *more* than one dimension is essential to infinitude. It is, in effect, demanded for punishment to be infinite—not only that, like a literally exhaustless stream, it should, to all eternity, pour into and refill the mind of the sufferer, but that, a bottomless and boundless ocean, it should, itself at every moment infinite in extent, find in that mind an infinite capacity for receiving it. The relation between the suffering and the mind which endures it, is not an objective one as that between a flood and the vessel which receives it, but it is a subjective relation which as certainly demands limit.

“Pain, being a subjective effect, must be measured by the rule of intensity, not of extension. But the one may, to a certain extent, be translated into the other, of which circumstance I have availed myself in the above figure of the ocean and the vessel. We may assume certain units of degrees of intensity, either arbitrarily, or sometimes according to natural rules, and, dividing and multiplying these by themselves, spread them out or heap them up over a certain extent of space or time. A certain large space of pale azure sky may, in this way, exhibit as much *blueness* as a smaller space more deeply blue. And, in like manner, we speak of suffering *as much* from the protracted pain of long suspense, as from

the concentrated agony of acuter certainty. But there is a limit to this exchange on both sides. We have now only to do with the one. Extension, relating only to outward addition, admits of infinite increase. Intensity, being an internal relation, has a limit beyond which it cannot go. There is a point beyond which any increment of the agent cannot produce an increment of action (*i.e.*, sensation), because the recipient can contain no more. Thus, as beyond a certain degree, our organs can take in no increase of intensity in colour, so there is a certain point beyond which any increase in the intensity of pain would become, to a finite being, a subjective impossibility.

“This last assertion, however, is not necessary to the present argument. All that it is necessary to grant (and this concession even the writer, I imagine, would not refuse) is, that as the extension of any given material object must be finite, so the intensity of any given feeling must also be finite; and, therefore, the amount of this suffering, which is to be concentrated within the compass of a century or a millennium, is limited in amount. The whole argument requires, indeed, that it be so considered.

“Let us now proceed to the question whether this definite amount of misery can be diffused through eternity. The succeeding sentence* of the reviewer leads us to suppose he would carry out this diffusion by diluting the suffering to a certain given intensity, and continuing it in this one uniform intensity throughout eternity; for it is only on this supposition that the ‘smaller amount’

* It follows immediately in this place. In this case as in others, however, I may have brought together sentences which were not in immediate juxtaposition.

can be said to be 'prolonged,' as *that amount* of suffering could not be prolonged, if it were afterwards to be altered in intensity. Now, it seems to me to be provable, by a very simple mathematical process, that (provided there be, as this theory supposes there is, a possibility of comparison of intensity) there must be some *definite* period, however protracted, when the smallest conceivable amount of suffering, continually prolonged, shall equal in amount any other definite amount of suffering, however intense. Whence it follows, that its indefinite prolongation after that must be a continual excess. Hence it is mathematically impossible that the very smallest suffering should be infinitely prolonged without *infinitely* exceeding that amount of misery, however terrible, that may be viewed by God as the due desert of sin.

"If, however, the idea of the writer was not that any given amount of suffering, however minute, should be prolonged; but that, on the principle of infinite divisibility, it should to all eternity become more and more attenuated, and yet never be more than finite, this supposition is, I allow, unlike the other, mathematically conceivable; but we should most of us, I think, concur in what seems to have been the opinion of his friend, and pronounce such diluted misery no misery at all. And this would be strictly true. Pain being a feeling of the mind, produced by an external cause, must be measured by a subjective standard, and not an objective one only. Thus, while matter is theoretically infinitely divisible, there is a point below which not only we could not divide, but could not *perceive* extension, so that if reduced below that matter would not exist for us; and, in like manner, beyond a certain limit pain cannot be

divided without, so far as respects us, becoming a non-entity. Or, returning to the apter illustration derived from the secondary qualities of bodies, just as there is a force of intensity which sensible qualities cannot exceed without being lost, so is there a faintness of intensity below which they cannot sink without also disappearing. The faint colour passes into colourlessness; the low sound glides into silence; and so must it be with all mental sensations.

“It is an idle reply to our anticipated objection to the scheme proposed above, ‘There is an end of the moral argument founded on the too great severity of endless suffering. We are not to be charged with ascribing both too much leniency and too much severity to the judgments of God.’ We have not charged *this* view with too great severity, for we most of us never heard of it before. And now we have heard of it, we do not find fault with it for its severity or its leniency, but for its absurdity, and its utter incompatibility with the language of Scripture, which, whatever it may say as to the *duration*, is not to be mistaken in its threat of *intensity* of suffering.

“It is not to be supposed the writer himself would have us adopt this curious theory, which was only intended to stop our mouths on the subject of the moral argument. But how trifling was it to answer our objection to one theory on a certain score, by proposing one to which we could not fail to object on another! We rejected the theory of a punishment, infinite because unending, for a finite offence, because it is unjust; we now reject a theory of punishment, finite though unending, because it is impossible; and end as we began by proposing a scheme both possible and just, in

which punishment is finite in amount because finite in duration.

"In fine, let me say, it is so rare a pleasure for us to be met by anything like close argument, we are much indebted to this writer in the *British Quarterly* for having met us thus, and can only wish that his example may be followed by others."

CHAPTER XIV.

BEAUTY AND TRUTH — EARLY ERROR — MR LLOYD'S
LETTERS—ANGLICAN OMNISM—OMNISM AND HUMAN
RELATIONS—CONCEALMENT OF REDIVIVALISM.

“MY DEAR MISS MILWOOD,—I rejoice to hear, through our friend Mr Merton, of your continued deep interest in those high themes we communed on together. Almost the first instant I saw you, I conceived the hope of your being one day a Universalist, and I now trust this hope is about to be realised. But—do you know? I am somewhat anxious as to the *manner* in which you are to hold the doctrine. There is a maxim which, from my childhood, I have heard my dear father so strongly insist on, that it has been fairly beaten into my mind, ‘Learn where to stop.’ For the attainment of truth, I think there are few things more important than to assign their proper limits to our natural inner tests of truth, and not to suffer them to go on from the interpreting of the voice of God’s objective revelation to the drowning of it. We had, if you remember, some very interesting conversation on this subject at Mr Merton’s. Now, dear Miss Milwood, the doctrine of destruction may be less delightful to you than that of final bliss; or, to put it in another form, your heart may not bear witness for the one as it does for the other;

but it would be a mistake to suppose that this is the *only* test of truth. Love is the most simple of all principles, and there is much in the realm of high truth, as of the lower, which involves principles that are very recondite, all which, doubtless, are in perfect harmony with the supreme law of love; but which formally are by no means coincident with it. Such, I think, is the case with the great truth of destruction. I would have you, dear friend, approach it with reverence, as a subject invested with awe, and yet with confidence and simplicity, as one really most compatible with the tenderness of God. I do not think, however, the matter was by any means fully brought out before you at Westerton, because you joined our circle after it was discussed. I have begged my husband to let me send you some of his papers on the subject. I am sure you will read them with interest, and I hope they will have the effect of convincing you of the truth of this important doctrine. We cannot *force* others, however, to feel and think as we do; and so, dear Miss Milwood, though it should end in your remaining as unconvinced as now, I hope I shall not be too much disappointed; at any rate, I shall rejoice in the strong bond of congenial feeling which still will unite us.—Yours affectionately,

“E. SOMERS.”

Miss Milwood to Elizabeth.

“DEAREST MRS SOMERS,—I have just received your letter with the accompanying most valuable packet of Mr Somers’ papers. These I shall read with the utmost and most candid attention. Meanwhile, I lose no time in expressing my deep sense of your kindness in interesting yourself as you do in my spiritual and theologi-

cal progress. Accept, too, my warm thanks for complying with my wish to know how your beloved parents received the intelligence of your change of views. It seemed to me all, as you describe it, most natural—your father's catholic heart, embracing you with its ancient warmth, not only as his unchanged child, but as the truth-lover, *the faithful one*; your gentle and more timid mother, somewhat fearful of the sea of speculation, as it seemed to her, on which her beloved daughter had launched. . . . Ah! dear Mrs Somers, I have no parents to love on in spite of every change. I fear much that I shall find my sister highly displeased with me when I return to her. She wrote me a letter lately which I cannot describe otherwise than as unkind, respecting my change of views, of which she had received a hint through others. I had not thought it well to write to her myself on the subject in the present immaturity of my opinions. You know how sensitive I am, and how dependent in feeling; and will, I know, feel for me. But I must seek to cherish in myself, by the aid of God's blessed Spirit, that which, believe me, I did obtain from you—deeper love for the truth for its own noble sake. I lately met with a passage, by a Scotch writer, the Rev. George Gilfillan, which breathes much the same spirit as your letter, 'Remorselessly, as it rushes on, truth scatters a thousand beautiful dreams, slumbering like morning dew-drops among the branches of the wood; but from the path of its progress there rises, more slowly, a stern but true and lasting glory, before which, in due time, the former "shall no more be remembered, neither come into mind."' "

"I am not naturally, however, so strong as you are; besides, you have a husband to lean on, and I stand

alone. Therefore, I must confess it is comforting to me to know that there have been, at different times in the Church, men of note and standing, who, to say the least, have doubted of the truth of Eternism. You read me something out of a note of Dr Hamilton's on the subject; would you be so kind, at your leisure, as to give me again the substance of what he says of the Church of England?

"I have been reading 'Milner's Church History' since you left—'the judicious and clear-sighted Milner,' as your husband terms him—and I have certainly been much struck with his honest testimony to the gross and absurd error which prevailed in the earliest ages of Christianity. Really, when we think how soon the stream of the Christian Church itself was stained with the mud of superstition and false philosophy—and even the best Christians, almost all, to use Milner's words, 'mixed human inventions with Divine truths, and clouded the pure light of the gospel'—I think it is enough to cure any thoughtful and candid mind of attaching any very great importance to the authority of *tradition*, nor, therefore, to a doctrine which derives its main strength from it.

"I had a very interesting letter lately from Mr Lloyd, in which, after referring to Mr Somers' remark of the traditional bonds which, like swaddling clothes, would keep us always babes, he says, 'Of this we have a marked example in the close adherence of our national translation of the Scriptures to that version with which, doubtless, the translators were the earliest and best acquainted—the Vulgate—their conformity with which is too constant, and in points too little self-evident, to allow the coincidence to be explained in consistence

with independent investigation. If, then, to the express Eternist testimony of these national versions, we add the authority of creeds, articles, confessions of faith, and the general conformity of opinion, in order to admission to the ministry or even to church-fellowship, required by bodies that have not such express standards, I think we may, without presumption, suppose the *possibility* of an opinion, even widely prevalent as this, being after all wrong.' He warns me that I shall often hear the term Universalism used as one of strong disapprobation, especially by American Christians; and this, in part, from the nature of the Universalism most prevalent in the United States, where the belief in the final happiness of all is usually combined with serious error. He says (I would have sent you the letter, but I have not sufficiently studied some parts of it), 'Of course, there are differences amongst Universalists there as in other countries; but those I refer to—and who constitute, I believe, by far the most numerous class—do not (let it be distinctly understood) believe in a temporary punishment proportioned to offence, but disbelieve in all future punishment whatever. This is certainly a pernicious doctrine (though occasionally found, I believe, with the greatest purity and real spirituality of life), and analogous in civil matters to the remission of all punishment for crime.' In a former letter he made some very valuable remarks on the slow development of Omnism.

“‘With regard to the great concealment hitherto of Universalism,’ he writes, ‘Scripture itself supplies us with an analogy in the prophecies of the calling of the Gentiles. This was a natural and clearly intentional type of God’s purposes of universal love, while the first separation of the Jews represented the election of a

peculiar people in Christ. This greater mystery—the true “mystery which has been kept secret for many ages”—has been all the time written in plain and un-effaced characters in the New Testament Scriptures as the other was in the Old. The glad tidings of a common salvation were received with astonishment, at first even incredulity, by the disciples of old, and such is the reception given in our day by the people of God generally to Universalism. The time, however, is not, I trust, very far distant when the Revealer of secrets will bring this glorious truth home to general conviction.’ ”

Elizabeth to Sophia Milwood.

“ Your letter touched and delighted me. I sympathise deeply with you in your insulation of feeling on many points, and especially on one so dear to you as Omnism. Believe me, too, I can understand better than you imagine the rest which it gives you to know that some of the excellent of the earth have held the view before you. I shall at once give you the substance of Dr Hamilton’s information on the particular point you speak of respecting the Church of England. Dr Hamilton rightly says it has, as a church, been undisguised in Eternism. At the same time, there is something remarkable, which needs explanation, in the subsequent omission of three of the original forty-two articles under Edward the Sixth, the last of which bore this title, ‘ All men shall not be saved at the length.’ Dr Hamilton quotes it as follows: ‘ They also are worthy of condemnation, who endeavour at this time to restore the dangerous opinion, that all men, be they never so ungodly, shall at length be saved, when they have suffered pains for their sins a certain time appointed by God’s justice.’ Tillotson and Jeremy

Taylor are instanced by Dr Hamilton as unsettled in Eternist views; while Bishop Newton, to the same conclusion with whom Hartley is described as coming, and Edmund Law, Bishop of Carlisle, are quoted as maintaining clearly the opposite. The quotation from Bishop Newton is as follows:—‘To suppose that a man’s happiness to all eternity should absolutely and unchangeably be fixed by the uncertain behaviour of a few years in this life, is a supposition even more unreasonable and unnatural than that a man’s mind and manners should be completely formed in his cradle, and his whole fortune and condition should depend upon his infancy—infancy being much greater in proportion to the few years of this life, than the whole of this life to eternity.’ Dr Southwood Smith, in the appendix to his valuable work on the ‘Divine Government,’ names Bishop Newton as an able and ardent advocate of Universalism. He also mentions, besides a pretty long list of works on that side, a letter, first printed in 1661, by Bishop Rust, ‘a learned prelate of the Church of Ireland, the intimate friend of Bishop Jeremy Taylor, and entitled, “A Letter of Resolution concerning Origen and most of his Opinions,” in which there are many strong and extremely well-written passages in favour of this opinion.’ This is also the case in a work which is considered of great merit, the ‘Treatise concerning the State of Departed Souls,’ of Dr Thomas Burnet, an English clergyman of much note in his day.

“You ask me if I have begun to *study* various subjects connected with this subject, along with my husband, and rightly esteem me highly privileged in having such a guide in the investigation of truth. But since our return, you will readily suppose my time has been

very much occupied with visitors. Besides my own friends, all the gentry for miles round are sedulous to pay their respects to my husband and his bride; and coming from a distance, they are often invited to stay lunch. Now you are aware that this is a mode of intercourse and a kind of society to which I am little accustomed, and at times I find it fatiguing; at others, being of an excitable temperament, I find it exciting, pleasurable, or otherwise; and in either case my mind is in the meantime often too much distracted to pursue a course of continued thought. But my delight in Omnism is all the time inexpressible; and when I fall back on it, I find it supply me at all times with a spring of healthful, refreshing, and exhilarating feeling. When I am tempted to despise such an one as *fade* and idealess, and to find her society wearisome in the extreme, and to dislike such another as heartless and full of petty malice, and to wish to avoid her society all my life, I turn in thought to the Divine *idea* eventually to be realised in both, and my contempt and repugnance are changed into respect and love. I must tell you, too, what a thrill I felt when we were walking in one of the streets of Manchester, and people were hurrying to and fro, all strangers to us, and none heeding us even for a moment, my husband pressed my arm within his, and with one of his beautiful smiles, so sweet and yet so manly, said, with a momentary glance upwards, 'We are all going one way!' My husband's position, his intellect and character, must secure him respect; and there is something about him which seems to give him a license, even in the estimate of common minds, to think for himself. I expect to find—indeed, I have already indications of it—that many of

my own friends will be estranged by my change of views. But while I repudiate and hate the notion, that when a woman marries she is to become, in heart, independent of former associations, still I should be ungrateful to the love which has so blessed me in my nearest relations, if I did not acknowledge their paramount preciousness and sufficiency. I feel now, indeed, as if, while my parents' and my husband's love were spared to me entire, no shaft of sorrow could reach my affections from any other quarter. But I fear I am thoughtless, my dear Miss Milwood, in writing thus to you, who have been in these respects so dissimilarly placed. You will, I feel certain, be blessed, though not perhaps just in the way that I have been. Meantime, I know well you would not begrudge me my present happiness, if you were aware how heart-dreary my life had generally been, except in the family affections, before I possessed it. Were this a selfish love, I should feel ashamed, dear friend, to write one word concerning it; but it seems to me that the highest blessing to be obtained through particular affections—and it is one which *I know* you will agree with me, can be gained through all such as are pure, and high, and worthy, whether they be outwardly crowned or not—is the deeper channel which they cut in the soul for the flow of all benevolent affections. And when Omnism is added, how exquisite is the feeling of universal benevolence! For my part, when I look at a squabbling imp, dirty and degraded, or think of the felon steeped in crime, and remember, 'Thou wilt one day be as beautiful and as dear to me as Frederic is now,' truly it seems to raise a fabric of wonder and of glory before my vision. Ah, dear friend, the ideas of God

infinitely transcend ours; and in this highest realm, even more emphatically than any other, shall we one day find that 'truth is strange—stranger than fiction.' ”

Mrs Merton to Elizabeth.

“I owe you many apologies, dear Mrs Somers, for my tardiness in replying to your kind letter; but *you know* how very much my time and mind are necessarily occupied with domestic duties. I find time, however, I assure you, to *think* very much on the grand themes we discussed together. I shall ever look back to that time as to a kind of oasis amidst the vulgarities of life. Be assured that, whatever belief I settle in, the high and holy influence of our converse then will ever be wafted back, as a breeze full at once of health and fragrance, back upon my spirit.

“You request me, however, to state any difficulties that may occur to me, and I shall now do so. The entire novelty of your views is, I must confess, a great stumbling-block to me. I give up the accusation of presumption entirely; for it is impossible not to see how humbly, as well as trustfully, you both hold the view. I also feel that the growth and spread of Divine truth is a matter which rests so entirely in God's hands, that *in itself* there is no difficulty in the supposition, that the good and the learned in preceding ages should have failed to see it; but, then, my difficulty is, How could God have *suffered* so grand and important a truth to remain so long hidden from His own children—the praying, trusting, *labouring* students and explorers of His blessed mind and will?—Yours in true affection,

“LAURA MERTON.”

Elizabeth to Mrs Merton.

"MY DEAR MRS MERTON,—Your letter did my heart good. I cannot but think it was a peculiar providence which led us to visit you this spring. Whatever the further result, I shall think so. . . . Your difficulty, so feelingly stated, set Frederic to write a short paper on the subject; and this I send you as far better than any reply I could indite. You may keep it if you choose, as Mary, who, with all her waywardness, is the most obliging creature in the world, has made a copy of it for me.

FREDERIC'S PAPER—RARENESS OF BELIEF.

"The rareness of belief, throughout every age, in Omnism as a *Scripture* doctrine, has led to an *à priori* argument against its truth, founded on a supposed law of the Divine procedure. 'Is it credible,' it is said, 'that a doctrine, if true, important and delightful as Universalism, should have been left by the great Disposer so long in the mine of Scripture undiscovered, save by comparatively a few individuals?' I shall draw my reply to this from a passage of Bishop Butler's, where, in another connexion, the fallacy of this mode of reasoning is demonstrated—'And as it is owned the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood, so, if it ever comes to be understood before the "restitution of all things," and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at—by the continuance and progress of learning and of liberty, and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing, intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality

of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made ; by thoughtful men tracing out obscure hints, as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible, that a book which has been so long in the possession of mankind should contain many truths as yet undiscovered. For all the same phenomena, and the same faculties of investigation, from which such great discoveries in natural knowledge have been made in the present and last age, were equally in the possession of mankind several thousand years before. And possibly it might be intended, that events, as they come to pass, should open and ascertain the meaning of several parts of Scripture.'

"He then observes that some parts of natural knowledge are of the greatest consequence to the ease and convenience of life (a truth still more palpable in our age than his); that the whole course of nature shews that 'God does not dispense His gifts according to our notion of the advantage and consequence they would be to us;' and that from this, and His method of dispensing knowledge, we have an analogy full to the point.

"An objector to revelation is then made to say, among other things, 'Is it credible that so many ages should have been let pass, before a matter of such a sort, of so great and so general importance, was made known to mankind; and then, that it should be made known to so small a part of them?' [The objection here urged against Revelation generally corresponds precisely to that we have mentioned as brought against Universalism. If, then, the late and so partial communication of a blessing, paramount as the gospel, does not, we feel, invalidate its claims to a Divine origin, *à fortiori* must

the similar claim of Universalism be unaffected by such an argument, since, however great its importance, it can by no means be compared with that of the gospel scheme.] To this the author replies, in the way of analogy, 'Men are naturally liable to diseases; for which God, in His good providence, has provided natural remedies. But remedies existing in nature have been unknown to mankind for many ages—are known but to few now; probably many valuable ones are not known yet.'

"When truths, whether of a theoretical or practical nature, are fully established, the folly of such a train of objection becomes apparent. Yet, if one should have said to Jenner, 'Your discovery, if true, would be so very useful, I cannot imagine it would have been withheld so long from mankind;' or another to Newton, 'This law of universal gravitation would be such an important truth, I do not think it could have been unknown till this day to philosophers and the world,' there would have been as much reason in either objection as in the similar one we are now considering.

"The law which God adopts in communicating the blessings of knowledge is one of progress and development. And where shall we find the point when this progress, this development, must cease? If we turn to science—how important, how glorious the discoveries which, after centuries of eager and searching investigation, and of days and nights of earnest, patient, and consuming toil passed by its many sons, it has remained for its votaries in our times to lay before us! How exhaustless, how bewildering in amount and wonder the knowledge drawn from this book of nature which is daily pouring in upon us! And how curious, how useful, how stupendous the applications of this know-

ledge in arts and inventions, whereby the wants and whims of man are met or anticipated, and the rebellious elements are compelled to do him service! And shall we believe that that other book—the book of Divine revelation—that rich and exhaustless world of truth, has no fresh treasures to yield us? Have we spread out for display all *its* wonders? Have we traced out all *its* labyrinths? Have our telescopes brought us tidings of all the stars in *its* firmament? If not, then let not their *novelty* make us reject fresh Scripture discoveries.”

CHAPTER XV.

MR COURTHOPE—FIRST DISCUSSION ON THE WILL.

THE readers of "Ashburn" may remember having been introduced to a young man of the name of Courthope, with whom, on the occasion of his spending an afternoon at Ashburn, Frederic had a short but interesting conversation on religious subjects. Their intimacy subsequently deepened; and this summer succeeding Frederic's marriage, Mr Courthope paid them a fortnight's visit at Ashburn. He was far more settled in his religious beliefs, and had now firmly and cordially closed with the doctrine of the atonement; but Calvinism presented certain formidable difficulties still to his mind.

I shall transport my readers with me to the library at Ashburn, which they must imagine a spacious room, almost entirely lined with bookshelves, surmounted by busts, with a lofty oaken ceiling, and three windows in deep recesses looking down on the lawn. Elizabeth had been sitting writing at a little table in one of these recesses, and had just risen to open the window, this sultry July noon, when her husband and Mr Courthope joined her from another part of the room. After all three had stood awhile by the open window enjoying the view and the cool breeze, and discussing the harvest prospects, Mr Courthope turning away, "Sit down by me here, Elizabeth," said Frederic, turning to the settee, and

leaving Mr Courthope to occupy the chair, over whose back he was leaning. "We are going to have a discussion which will highly delight you: it is on Liberty and Necessity."

Mr C.—"In the first place, I think I may ask it of your candour to consider this question simply as one of consciousness and reasoning, and not as one of dogmatic Scriptural teaching one way or the other."

Fred.—"Certainly. I am quite willing we should treat it so in the first place, at any rate."

Mr C.—"Natural religion teaches us that there is one Supreme Sovereign of the universe, whose will is paramount. But though whatever He wills to be done is done, and whatever He wills not to be done is not done, I do not see that we are obliged to believe that everything that is and happens is to Him a matter of will at all; a very great deal is matter of indifference, and, in a certain sense, of chance."

Fred.—"What do you mean by a thing being a matter of chance? Do you mean that it is uncaused?"

Mr C.—"No. I believe with you, that no actuality is uncaused. But what I mean is this: two effects, each necessarily connected with its own cause, may also have a relation to one another that was not contemplated in the production of these effects, and which therefore, as regards them, was accidental; but, more than this, this relation, if it be in itself a matter of sheer indifference, and if it lead to nothing beyond itself, may be said to be neither as an end nor as a means worthy to have been contemplated, nor actually to have been contemplated by God Himself, not therefore a matter of *will* to Him at all, but of *accident*. Let us suppose a case. A wishes to walk from east to west, and does so; B wishes

to walk from west to east, and does so; at a certain point they meet, but do not observe each other, and pass on. Here was a relation which, ending with itself, was in every sense accidental."

Fred.—"Very ingenious! Is it not, Elizabeth? I am curious to see to what this is to conduct us."

Mr C.—"My argument comes to this. If God has so arranged the mechanism of the universe that His *ends* shall be accomplished, it may be that there are other things which, as respects these, are indifferent and accidental, which He leaves to be determined by the will of man; and this may account for what after all *must* be accounted for—the consciousness man has of freedom in the exercise of his will."

Fred.—"Your first illustration requires particular consideration. I am inclined to think there is a fallacy arising from neglecting the truth that a relation is a subjective thing, which only exists as it inheres in some mind. Now, that A should start at a particular time and in a particular direction, and stop at a particular spot, are not by the hypothesis a matter of indifference, nor are so the similar particulars respecting B. Therefore, the necessary result is not a matter of indifference that A and B should both be at a particular time at the spot we will call C, where they cross each other by the way. But what may be a matter of indifference is the relation which this brings A and B into with one another—a relation which only exists as they are contemplated together in connexion with the same spot. Now this relation, to exist at all, must exist in some mind. We will suppose it to exist only in the Divine mind, and to be viewed by it with indifference. The result of our investigation is this, that, so far as our

human language can describe the case, the Divine as the human mind has certain ideas in it, which exist there simply as ideas, and not as objects of choice or affection—a conclusion which is, I think, highly reasonable. But can anything which springs from will be to God only an idea? According to my view, you have not granted enough when you say, whatever God wills is done, and whatever He wills *not* to be done is not done. I maintain that natural religion, carried its full length, requires us to say that nothing but what He wills is done; for if anything were done independent of His will, He would, as respects that event and the agent in it, not be God; and if anything in the universe can be independent of God, everything might.”

Mr C.—“But what if God have, in the shape of will, given to every rational being a limited power of origination, as the father out of his own income deals out to his children a certain sum to spend as they like?”

Fred.—“What prevents the cases from being parallel is, that the son is, as respects the father, an independent being, which the creature cannot be towards God. God Himself—I say it with reverence—could not confer on the creature the power of standing by itself independent of Him. The mechanician, it is true, shews his skill in so constructing his machine, as that it shall continue to work when he has left it. He leaves it to itself, we say; but this in reality means that he leaves it to God, who, by means of the so-called laws of nature, is continually acting upon it. But God cannot in this way leave us, because He has no higher God to take His place; and as for leaving us, strictly speaking, to ourselves, why, if we can go on carrying out the highest kind of life—that of the will—independently, I see not

why we should not have obtained it at first independently too."

Mr C.—"Your system appears to be a species of Pantheism."

Fred.—"I would not give it that name, because it would be misleading. If by Pantheism was meant the doctrine that every act in the universe was God's act, I should certainly subscribe to it; but if it is understood, as in this connexion I believe it always is, to mean that God is the *only* actor, I reject it. Man, though in every act acted upon, yet himself acts, just as the body that is moved itself moves."

Mr C.—"Ah! There, I think, is another objection to your system: it would confound the distinction between matter and mind—matter is acted on, mind acts."

Fred.—"No, I should say the distinction was, that matter was simply acted on, but in none but a figurative sense ever acts, whereas derived mind, as the underived, though acted on, itself acts."

Mr C.—"I can scarcely call that *my* act which another performs for me."

Fred.—"But if another causes you to act, then it is a contradiction in terms to say you do not act. It is the same with being. Because God causes you to be, you do not for that cease to be. Indeed, the very difficulty you start, as to the exercise of the will, applies with equal force to the whole of what constitutes conscious existence. Without considering just now whether matter can in any but a relative sense be said to exist, it is certain that existence, as predicated of it, is totally unlike, not presenting one idea in common with that of sentient mind; whereas the existence of conscious mind, presenting as a present actuality many of the same ideas

as the existence of God Himself, may as truly be termed existence. If, when God creates a man in a state of feeling—that of love, for instance—he really loves, what is the difficulty of believing, that when God creates a man in the act of willing, he really wills?”

Mr C.—“ I think there is a great difference in the two cases. Emotions are created in us : by acts of will we ourselves energise on others.”

Fred.—“ Any argument founded on the distinction will, I think, fail, if we remember that, in point of fact, God as truly *creates* a being at every successive moment of His life as He did when first He brought him into existence, though, for distinction's sake, we may restrict the term to this first act. And to say that God creates a being's existence, is the same as saying that He creates everything which constitutes that existence, whether active or passive. Thus God creates man at first, you maintain, with only a power to will : but then, if He afterwards creates him in a certain state of existence, part of which consists in an exercise of that power, *i. e.*, an act of will, what is that but saying that God creates that will?”

Mr Q.—“ But we are responsible for our wills and not for our capacities, and why is that but that the first are strictly our own?”

Fred.—“ It is because there is the moral element in the one, and not in the other, not because the one is our own and the other not—the one self-derived and the other not. It would be better, however, to leave the moral side of the question till we have disposed of the metaphysical.”

Mr C.—“ Well, confining ourselves to that, it is to me inconceivable and contrary to my consciousness, that

in our acts of will it is God who is willing and not we."

Fred.—"But Necessitarians do not say that God's will acts instead of man's; but only that it acts on and through man's. Of this consciousness can give no report: it is beyond its sphere. The will is conscious that it acts, not how it comes to act. It is a matter of everyday experience, too, that consciousness requires some degree of education before it can detect its own limits. The child, who has failed to note the processes whereby he comes to will only to do that with his legs and arms which he is able to do, fancies there is no agency at work but that of his will every time he clenches his hand or stamps his foot. He imagines that the transition is as direct between his volition and his bodily act, as that between the original fiat of the Creator and the result—God said, 'Let there be light, and there was light.' But later in the day he learns, perhaps by means of a fit of illness, that when the creature wills, he cannot directly effect the thing which he purposes, as respects his own body, any more than the world without. *E. g.*, a man wills to raise his hand, but the connexion between his willing and his doing it, depends not on himself but on God. He might will a thousand times more strongly than he does, and if God did not cause his body to obey the impulse, it would not obey it. Now, in like manner there is many an adult who fancies that he has but to will in order to will, but whom a better informed consciousness would teach that there is an inconceivable number of things which (metaphysically) there is nothing to prevent his willing to will, but which, practically, he could not will. And what does this prove?"

Mr C.—"But, morally considered, the act of will is

the real act. If the child wills to strike me, but finds that, weakened by fever, he cannot do so, still, in a moral point of view, he has struck me. Therefore, it seems a self-contradictory assertion that an act of will can be as such abortive."

Fred.—"That is a very interesting and important difficulty: I don't quite see how I can get rid of it. Can you help me, Elizabeth? Why is it that if I will to hurt a man, it is morally the same as if I did so; whereas if I will to be good and kind, and yet do not succeed in being so, it is by no means morally the same as if I had succeeded?"

Elizabeth.—"I think the solution must be found in the principle you have often laid down, that the motives which lead to an act of will give it its true character, and not the result of the act, whether this be physical or moral in its nature. So you must look, in the one case, to the motives which led you to will to strike, and not to the not-striking; and, in the other, to the present motives which led to the particular act of willing to be good and kind, and not to the absent goodness and kindness, which, had they existed, would certainly have in their turn furnished fresh motives to action. If those present motions were conscientious, then the moral act was so far good; but if they were only selfish, arising out of the discomfort of evil, the act was only a selfish one."

Mr C.—"I think that is a very satisfactory explanation. Do not you, Mr Somers?"

Fred.—"Perfectly so. Let me see, how stood our argument? Oh, I wished to lay down that if we find that the will, free as it may seem, is yet restricted on all sides, though we may first come to the consciousness of this, like the child with his enfeebled strength, by our

wishing to will something we cannot will, we must look for some cause for our willing as we do, and in no other manner, out of our own will. It is true that we sometimes seem able to determine our own wills in things indifferent, but I think Edwards has shewn that, even in these cases, the will does not directly influence the will, but it is always by means of some consideration which takes the place of a motive. It is impossible simply to will to will. But even if this were possible in such cases as I have referred to, it is clearly not so in those of a strictly moral nature; for if they were determined in any other way than by motives, they would not be moral acts."

Mr C.—"Well, though I cannot give up the conviction that we are able in a measure to choose our own motives, I freely acknowledge that we must act from some motive, and that this motive must be in harmony with our nature, which was given to us, and not created by us, so that I do recognise a kind of necessity of the will; but this is very different from our having each volition directly created in us by God."

Fred.—"I object to the expression that we can choose our own motives, because we cannot do this directly. We can, indeed, *influenced by a motive*, choose to turn our minds towards certain objects of thought, and cultivate certain feelings rather than others, and thus by means of present supply in a measure future motives and influence future volitions; but this is the only way in which we can do so. The reason why I say that God creates each volition, is that, as I said before, it seems to me contrary to first principles to suppose that any power more than any agent has an energy independent of the great Preserver, in whom all lives, and moves, and has its being."

Mr C.—"I return, however, to my first difficulty. Though it be but a mode of statement, and laws be but settled principles of the Divine procedure, still it surely involves an essential and important difference, whether, in the matter of conversion, which [turning to Elizabeth] was our starting-point in this discussion, the laws of our original nature are complied with or set aside."

Fred.—"The distinction is certainly important. But if, when an original law is only set aside or kept in abeyance in order to be supplemented by a new law, *law* itself may be equally honoured."

Mr C.—"A new law. That is just the question. Is it a law, or a direct and special interference with law?"

Fred.—"Not to be captious, I must still require, according to my view of the case, an explanation of that expression 'direct interference,' which shall prevent it from misleading. All being God's direct acting, there is, properly speaking, no room for His *interference*; still there is a sense in which that combination of laws which forms our original nature may be considered more *ours*, than the new combination which is the result of conversion, though this may be quite as much in accordance with *law* as the other."

Mr C.—"In ascribing this act of conversion more specially to God, I only adhere, you must allow, to the language of divines on the subject."

Fred.—"Yes, that is quite true, and they adhere in it closely to the language of Scripture, as when it says, 'Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.' And again, 'Faith which is not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.' The only possible way I can see of reconciling such expressions with the doctrine I have maintained of

the universal agency of God, is to understand the term *God* here as signifying the Holy Ghost—that Divine Agent whose office it specially is to execute the *true* will of the Supreme.”

Mr C.—“Of course, believing in the Bible, I cannot but maintain the existence and influence of the Holy Spirit; but I must confess I cannot see how his influence can differ in kind, though it may in degree, from that of fellow-men upon each other—namely, the presentment of motive—without doing violence to the fundamental principles of our constitution.”

Fred.—“I appreciate your objection. I would observe, in the first place, however, that, while certainly the ordinary mode of human influence, and the only one that can be termed moral, is that which acts through motive; yet the facts of mesmerism seem to shew there is such a thing as one will acting directly on another, without the intervention of *motive* properly so called. In like manner may the Holy Ghost, I believe, directly produce volitions simply by the exercise of his will; but certainly all his spiritual and saving influence must be by means of motives. The question, however, remains, How are these motives produced? Motives are, we know, the product of nature and circumstances. There are many who view it as the office of the Spirit simply to bring the individual into such bodily and mental circumstances, as that the truths of the gospel, reaching his understanding, shall present a class of new and powerful motives to the whole nature, which, acting according to their proper character, there arises a set of new and marked results, which we term conversion. But if this be all, what has the Spirit done which men cannot do for one another, and for themselves? A phi-

lanthropist, by dint of affectionate and wise persuasion, perhaps long applied, at last induces a drunkard to attend a temperance meeting. He there is convinced of the evil and sin of drunkenness, and the duty of total abstinence; and, yielding to his convictions, and adopting and adhering to the better practice, he becomes morally a changed man. It is the process of cure in this case which I would draw attention to, not the result. Here all that is done *for* the man is done from without, which by no means answers to the description given in the Scriptures of the Spirit's influences. Moreover, though I believe and rejoice in the possibility of a great and beautiful *gradual* moral change, by the awakening and strengthened re-assertion of the better principles of the natural man, progressively subjugating the inferior, it seems to me to be doing violence to the laws of the human constitution to imagine a sudden inward change of this sort. Whenever the change is at once genuine and instantaneous, and of such we have authentic records, it must plainly be traced (as in my view it is in every case of true conversion in reality traceable) to the direct energy of the Holy Spirit, who puts a new love, a new faith into the heart."

Mr C.—"There remains the deeply important question of responsibility, How we can be accountable for the non-possession of that which we could not give ourselves."

Fred.—"Though it certainly does not affect the main question in dispute, I must remind you, that it is by no means necessary to say, because a man cannot be saved without the influences of the Holy Ghost, therefore he is *responsible* for not possessing these influences. He is responsible for his sins, and for these alone. The grace

of the Holy Spirit is a privilege, which God, in this stage of his being, does not confer upon him. This is the uniform tenor of Scripture upon this point. With regard to the large general question of responsibility, though I do not think I have any one thing to add to what the *Master* on this subject has already written ('What can the man do that cometh after the king?'), I shall hand you a paper of my own, which I should be glad you studied. We can then discuss the subject together again. My paper was written some years ago. The question being for ever settled in my mind, I have long ceased to read much upon it. I have lately met with some things, however, on the subject, especially in Sir William Hamilton's notes on Reid's 'Philosophy,' which would help me, I think, to give greater precision to some points, were I to do it over again."

CHAPTER XVI.

FREDERIC'S TREATISE ON THE WILL.

"IN approaching the subject of the will, the first feeling which naturally arises in the mind of a Necessitarian is a kind of despair, not grounded on the feebleness of proof on his side, but on the masterly manner in which that proof has been already adduced. 'If Jonathan Edwards has failed to make the doctrine triumphant,' we are inclined to say, 'who shall ever succeed?'

"Had he been refuted, indeed, it might have been rash in any other champion to take the field. But refuted he has not been; scarcely can we say he has been met. The arguments he combated have been again brought forward; but on the subject of the will, no one, I believe, has been found bold enough to engage yard-arm to yard-arm with Jonathan Edwards. It is an easier thing to reproduce a refuted fallacy than to refute the refutation.

"Edwards' reasonings, therefore, are still available for us; but while finding in them our main strength, our sheet-anchor, we, his successors, may find other arguments to add to his.

"The words, *necessary* and *necessity*, vary in meaning according to what is spoken of; but there is always implied an impossibility of the contrary, or rather of the contradictory. As respects philosophical necessity, this

impossibility springs solely from objective certainty, founded—

“1. In the nature of things, under which head comes all mathematical truth. Thus two and two make four. This truth is necessary; its contradictory is impossible. Or,

“2. Founded in fact. The existence of that which is now, or has been, is certain. It has made sure of occurrence already; its non-occurrence is impossible. Or,

“3. Founded in consecution. Future events, though they cannot be certain in either of the two first ways, may derive certainty from connexion with other things that are so. Thus, what is foretold by God is certain, because resulting from the past fact of His prediction, and the certain truth of His immutability. But, moreover, it can be shewn that all future events are necessarily connected with some certain past cause, and, therefore, are certain—there is no real contingency about them. To us they are generally contingent; we know not whether they shall turn out this way or that, but they cannot be contingent in the sense that it is really equally possible for them to have the one as the other issue.

“Every event must have a cause, and each particular in the character of the event must have a cause. No mode of being, any more than a substance, can bring itself into existence. As every future event then, when it happens, will have been *caused* to be exactly as it will be, the cause or concurrence of causes which will produce it, viewed now beforehand as existing, cannot fail to produce exactly that result (in other words, the connexion between them is necessary), as, if *they* could produce any other, there will be some *other* reason for that actual result, and not any other,

occurring, which is a contradiction, as this other supposed reason must, according to the original condition, be *included* amongst the concurring causes which will produce the actual result. The connexion, therefore, between those concurring causes and the result is certain and necessary. These concurring causes may not *as actualities* yet exist, but they must in their cause or causes, immediate or more remote, for future existences not being self-existent (as then they would never begin to be), must have the ground of their existence in something that goes before them, which is either itself unbeginning and self-existent, or is connected by a necessary chain with that which is so, that great first Cause, whose character, being fixed and certain, makes all that results from it so also.

“This train of argument must apply equally to the volitions of moral agents with the events of the material world. As having a beginning, they are not self-existent. If they have any ground of existence, they must have it out of themselves—that is, they must be caused; and if caused, they are necessary. In order, therefore, to suppose them in the Libertarian sense contingent and free, they must be without a ground of existence—in other words, the result of chance. Now such an hypothesis strikes at the root of all reasoning. The law of cause derives all its force from its universality and its necessity. If one class of events could happen uncaused, we cannot be sure that the connexion of cause and effect is not all a delusion; and not only shall we be unable to prove, from natural principles, the existence of a Supreme Being, but all positive knowledge will be lost to us except that which we gain from immediate consciousness, as it is all derived from inferring from effects to their causes

and conversely. But supposing not only the connexion of visible things between themselves, but the existence and agency of the invisible God to be, spite of the undermining of the argument, firmly believed, yet does this theory derogate from His supremacy, not only by making the creature in a very important sense independent of Him and a sharer of His dignity as a First and absolute Cause, but by placing a vast portion of the future, as respects the brute and inanimate creation, beyond His control. Seed time and harvest may return, but where is the certainty of seed being sown, or harvest reaped? The orb of earth may run its destined course, but long, long ere that is expired, it may have become a vast wilderness, or a loathsome charnel-house, unworthy to be shone upon by sun or moon.

“Some would escape from this difficulty by supposing God to foreknow though He does not ordain the future volitions of men, and to suit other things accordingly. In the first place, this is a sorry kind of power to assign to the great Ruler of all things, but moreover, on the supposition of contingency, even this advantage is not allowable. Foreknowledge is knowing that a thing certainly will be. That which is contingent may or may not be, therefore that which God foreknows, He knows not to be contingent, or that which may not be. And as He is never mistaken, whatever He foreknows is not contingent. But it may be said, the prescience of God is too mysterious a subject for us to comprehend, and He may know that a thing certainly will be from other grounds than its being certain—that is, such as cannot be otherwise. Even granting this, that He knows it on other grounds, yet His knowledge cannot be inconsistent with fact; if He knows from any ground that a thing

certainly will be, then it certainly will be, it is impossible it should be otherwise, which is what we mean by necessity. If it be said, though future events are certainly foreknown, yet they may be free, God's prescience need have no more effect on their direction than our foreknowledge derived from God's predictions has on the volitions of those who are to be actors in future scenes,—we may grant this. Foreknowledge is not the cause of absolute certainty, but it is the effect of it. It does not *make*, but it *proves* it. God's knowing that a thing will happen is not the ground of the impossibility of its not happening, but it proves that there *is* such an impossibility. And thus we are brought round to the same result. The future which God foreknows is necessary—it *cannot but* be. Now it is generally acknowledged that God foresees all the future.

“Seeing, therefore, there are such great, not to say insuperable objections to the doctrine of contingency, let us turn to the scheme of necessity and see if it presents us with equal difficulties. The main objections brought against this scheme seem to be, that in representing human volitions as necessary links in a chain of causes and effects, it is opposed to consciousness, and that it does away with all moral responsibility by denying the freedom of the will, and making man a mere passive instrument, and not, properly speaking, an agent at all.

“We will first consider the expression *the freedom of the will*. Freedom everywhere but in this controversy has been used to imply the condition of having a will and of being able to follow it out. Now this is plainly inapplicable to the will itself, which is a faculty, and not an agent having a will. There is something very misleading therefore in the term *freedom of the will*, and

accordingly it has been a source of much groundless prejudice against the Necessitarian doctrine, as if, when denying the freedom of the *will*, it denied that of the soul willing.* A moral agent must have a will, and a moral sense—a sense of right and wrong—to direct the will. His acts are free, just so far as they are acts of his will, because the *definition* of a free act is that it is an act of will or of choice. And it is only as his acts are free, that he is a moral agent in them. If one man were to force a knife into the hand of another, and by physical force compel him to stab a third, the first man would be the sole moral agent in the deed. It is a part of the definition of a moral act that it is free. With this freedom the scheme of necessity does not in the least interfere, concerning itself as it does with the *origin*, and not the fact, of choice. This is the only freedom that conscience requires for responsibility, and the only one consciousness bears witness to. The *act* of willing is an ultimate fact of consciousness: the origin of the act lies beyond its pale as a self-observer. It lies in the region of inference, not observation.

“This view is also accused of making man a mere passive instrument. But surely what constitutes a passive instrument is the absence of will. The knife that stabs is a passive instrument, because it has no will to stab, no pleasure in stabbing. In whatever a man effects by an *act* of his *will* he is a *willing agent*, or there is no meaning in words. We see many things acted upon that are passive themselves in the effect produced, but such is the nature of the will that it cannot be acted upon without acting, just as a thing cannot be moved

* It would be better that the opposite doctrine were always designated as that of Indifference or Self-determination of the will.

without moving. Libertarians, indeed, require that the motion should be self-generated—this is what they insist on in their hypothesis of the *self*-determination of the will. A difficulty might be started. Must not a self-generated power obey one uniform law? whereas the will is ever *varying* in its direction. However this be, we can scarcely imagine any motion, whether self-generated or not, that does not obey *some* law, and if law is introduced, we must part with contingency. But if we consider the nature of the will, we shall see that it must be determined from without. It is not like a propension whose end can be its own exercise. We may have a vague feeling of benevolence, a vague feeling of fear, but we can have no vague feeling of will. We must will something determinate, or we cannot will at all. The attraction exercised on the will, while it is as unlike as possible to a mechanical force, which is opposed by another that resists, is a force of a moral kind resembling that of elective affinity, whereby a body draws to itself another which is suited to it. Neither is it, as has been affirmed, a matter of consciousness that our will is undetermined or self-determined, or in other words, that we have the power of *willing what we will*, which has been given as the definition of liberty. This, if it be not an identical proposition—that we will what we *do* will—seems to assert something that is contrary to the testimony of consciousness, besides leaving the difficulty concerning *determination* just where it was; for we must still account for our willing to will as we actually do, and not otherwise. It is not, I say, a matter of consciousness that we can directly determine our future volitions. In this as in other cases we may will to take certain means to bring about certain results (for instance, we may keep ourselves out of the way of temptation),

but the result itself cannot be a direct matter of volition. I think, moreover, we may affirm that were it so, we should will very differently in many cases from what we actually do. The will chooses what is most agreeable to itself at the time, whether that be a present or a distant good. Sometimes it rejects a great future advantage in order to avoid a present inconvenience. Now, it is because incurring this present evil is too disagreeable to the mind that the will in the supposed case does not choose it; but to will the incurring of it, and thereby secure the after benefit, could not be disagreeable, for an act of preference cannot in the nature of things be a disagreeable act. If, then, this wise act, not disagreeable in the present, and productive of good in the future, can be an object of direct volition, how is it it so often fails to take place? If the will, therefore, is *extra-determined*, what is it that determines it? Here, as in many other cases, we must judge of and measure the cause by the effect.

“The term *motive* is used in two different senses. In one it is applied to that which is *fitted* to bear upon the will; in another, to that only which does actually bear upon it. Now, when we say that the will is determined by the strongest motive, we use the word in the latter sense, and mean that, while there may be many conflicting motives bearing more or less on the will, its actual direction is determined by that propension which, from its own natural (that is, usual) strength, or the existing susceptibility of the mind, or actual position of the individual, or all or several of them combined, is the most readily acted on at the moment. The strength of the cause or causes is measured by the effect. Now, the assertion made by some that it depends on the will itself whether it shall suffer itself to be acted on by a certain

motive, and whether it shall obey the weaker or the stronger, or whether it shall act without any motive at all, is plainly absurd if we take the word motive in the above sense, as in it a motive is only a motive as it acts on the will—the strongest motive is that which the will obeys. Thus, in a case of what is called choosing in things indifferent, the will may have to determine between things in themselves of quite equal recommendations to our preference, but it is clear that the will must come to prefer one rather than another, or no volition concerning them is possible. However slight and inappreciable the preponderance of weight in either scale, such a preponderance must exist, or the equilibrium would not be disturbed. Thus, also, if the will can act without a motive in the first of the two senses of motive mentioned above, it is utterly impossible that it should in the last. We cannot conceive the mind's being induced but by a motive even in the determination to act without a motive. And if the thing were possible, instead of making any nearer approach to *liberty* in being able to act without a motive, we should lose thereby our privilege as rational creatures.

“We have thus endeavoured to shew that the doctrine of necessity is not contrary to the only true and possible freedom; that it is not opposed, but rather conformable to consciousness, which cannot, it is true, take direct cognisance of the *origin* of its own ultimate acts, but which, by its negative testimony, proves that these acts, when acts of will, are not self-determined, but extra-determined.

“We now proceed to another objection. If the will is *necessarily* determined by what appears most agreeable to it at the time, and it is quite beyond its power to

make one thing agreeable to it and another disagreeable, how can there be either praise or blame attached to its determination? I reply, that this objection is founded on the great mistake of putting the will before the character, instead of the character before the will, the latter being only an exhibition of the former. It is not the will that determines the character, but the character the will. It is in what a being delights that his real moral beauty or deformity lies. We cannot get behind that—we cannot penetrate to anything deeper, more intimate, than that. The benevolent man chiefly delights in the happiness of others; the selfish man prefers his own ease and the gratification of his own desires; the malevolent being finds his chief pleasure in the misery of his fellow-creatures. It is not necessary, in order to praise and blame these characters respectively, that they should *make* themselves what they are. It is enough for this that they should *be* what they are. It is contrary to the conscience and common sense and practice of mankind, as well as to sound philosophy, to require, for praise or blame, anything more than that the objects should exhibit moral good or evil. The question of cause or origin is altogether a foreign and irrelevant one. This Edwards has convincingly proved. He shews that if, as some maintain, the evil is not in evil itself but in its cause, and the goodness not in good itself but in its cause, we shall chase good and evil altogether out of the universe, for the evil and good of the cause must on the same principle not be in its nature, but *its* cause, and thus we shall go on *ad infinitum*.

“ ‘How is it, then,’ it may be said, ‘that parentage, education, companionship, condition, prospects, things which affect our character much, but over which we have

little or no control, are always taken into account in our estimate of a character, for excuse or aggravation?' If we examine closely we shall find that this arises from our judging that, in the first place, the same amount of manifest evil in the case of one whose outward circumstances were fitted to promote it, proves much less inward depravity than it would with one placed in circumstances calculated to foster good dispositions. In the last case, how revolting would be even those minor delinquencies which we must regard with more pity than blame, when committed by the grossly ignorant and neglected, our poor, forlorn, and depressed brethren. We know that the same violence of conduct, habits of deception and dishonesty, surrender even to the low baits of sense, which would indicate a natural depravity irremediable save by supernatural agency in one who had been surrounded by virtuous influences, may in those other unhappy beings be compatible with much natural benevolence and even conscientiousness, nay, a capacity for exalted enjoyments—all which qualities, though overcome and apparently stifled, cannot be entirely eradicated (for no natural tendency can), and may be exerting a counteracting influence which the Searcher of hearts can estimate, though we may be unable to do so.

“But if we turn from the consideration of the mere inference to be drawn from outward conduct, to contemplate that inward *real* deterioration which is in great part the result of circumstances, and compare it with the same amount of *original* depravity—according to the view here combated we should, if there were any difference, blame and dislike the former the most; for there cannot be said to be that inevitable necessity in the working of circumstances which there is in that of

original corruption. The will has more opportunity to intervene as respects the former. And yet, if I mistake not, our feelings generally decide the other way. We make less allowance for the temper sour by nature than for that which has been soured by disappointment, though it is certain no disappointment or chagrin *need* sour any temper. This probably arises from our judging that modifications of disposition produced by circumstances are not so deep, so permanent, and irremediable, therefore not so *really* a part of the character, as what was born with us. Thus, after all, we keep to the rule, often unconsciously to ourselves, of judging according to the nature and amount of the good and evil, and not at all by their origin.

“Is there, then, no truth at the bottom of the feeling, ‘We cannot help it, therefore it is no fault, no merit of ours?’ Yes, surely there is. There are two kinds of inability—natural, perhaps better named physical (taking the term, however, in a wider sense than is usually assigned to it), and moral. The strength of both is the same, but while the one does away with praise and blame, the other deeply involves both. Thus, if a man addicted to drunkenness kept sober for many months, because he had no opportunity of obtaining intoxicating drinks, and if another man let his wife and children starve because by no exertion could he earn enough to maintain them—these cases have quite a different moral character from the two other supposable cases, of a man who, spite of all persuasions and threats to induce him to drink to intoxication, should refuse to do so because morally incapable of so demeaning himself, and of another man who should abandon his family to starvation because morally incapable of restraining his own

appetites. The first are cases of natural, the latter of moral necessity.

"There is one great difference, however, between moral inability to good and that to evil. We feel that the word *bondage* is applicable only to the former. The latter indeed is the truest freedom. Thus among the ancients a 'free man' meant a virtuous man. There is no propensity, however strong, but is sometimes in abeyance. If, then, there is a consciousness that it has been exercised to a sinful extent in times past, reason and conscience may at such a time raise a reproving and warning voice, and the will may be strongly set against the repetition of the sin; but remembering, perhaps, how often it has yielded in times past, may mourn over its own weakness and the bondage of sinful habit. The freedom it must then sigh for is not the freedom of self-determination, for it cannot trust *itself* in any sense, but a freedom granted to it from without, that of being *kept* faithful to the high principles which now for the moment fill it.

"Do we then assert that the will has nothing to do with the formation, but only with the manifestation of the character? Assuredly not. This would be an immense mistake. While the character in the first place determines the will, it is also true that the will in its turn helps indirectly to determine the character. By a deliberate and continued cherishing and exercise of the good, and repression and mortification of the evil that belongs to the natural character, great and radical changes may be effected. This gives rise to the contrast with which all are familiar between nature and principle, which is not quite identical with the one formerly dwelt on between innocence and virtue.

"It is the bent of some minds to place a much higher value on those good qualities which are the fruit of principle, than on such as spring from natural amiability. Those, on the contrary, who have a greater taste for the beautiful than the sublime, will be apt to underrate the merit of an inward conflict with evil. This is not a question that can be summarily decided. It is a most interesting contemplation, which may well excite our deepest sympathy and warmest admiration, when we see a highly conscientious and exalted character maintain a steady and earnest conflict with its own evil tendencies. But there may be a certain amount of resistance on the part of conscience to unamiable propensities, which will produce a result in one man less noble as well as less beautiful than will in another a sweet, generous disposition, which has only to follow its own impulses to be loving, magnanimous, and tender. This last individual *may*, moreover, possess those high principles which would have led him to contend quite as much as the other has done with evil tendencies (such as crabbed, passionate, and miserly dispositions) had he possessed them; and surely no one will say in that case, that his character is less praiseworthy for the want of these. Such a struggle as that described above sets forth in such a clear honourable light the power of those high principles which animated to it, that it sometimes draws to itself an undeserved monopoly of praise.

"It is only the exclusiveness of the praise, however, which is objectionable. In every field of culture one of the noblest applications of the powers of man is that towards the improvement of nature, the raising of the actual towards the ideal. This is the highest aim of art, and it deals not only with the outer world, but with the

inner too ; for the term *art* seems not inapplicable to the improvement of man, even his self-improvement. But in all this, is it not nature working still, *sentient* nature, introspective, working on itself, or fashioning towards the ideal impressed on itself (suggested, but not realised, in the actual) the inferior creation without? Art finds in nature her materials, her tools, and her idea.* Those very principles which have influenced the will in its endeavours to discipline and exalt the character, are a part of the *nature* of the individual as much as his other impulses are. And whether this nature be that with which we are born, or the new nature, the product of the second birth, in both cases its origin must be traced higher than to our own will. It is not the less intrinsically ours on that account, for nothing can be ours if our nature is not so. There is a sense, indeed, in which nothing is ours. And oh ! how delightful is the feeling of our nothingness—the feeling, whatever we are, whatever we become, whatever we possess, whatever we obtain, whatever acts upon us, whatever we act upon—all, all, is gift ; in all is *One* the Creator and the Agent!

“The Necessitarian scheme has been confounded with that of fatality, or the doctrine, that we need not concern ourselves with means at all, that issues are certain, and so we may leave them to work out themselves. The true doctrine of necessity is diametrically the opposite of this. It teaches that means are as necessary as ends, and it shews how it is they are so. Edwards, with his usual clenching force, has turned against the doctrine of contingency the charge it brings against that of necessity,

* “Nature is made better by no mean, but nature makes that mean.”—SHAKESPEARE.

of casting a slight on means. Means are only important on account of their connexion with results; whatever, therefore, strengthens that connexion, must raise the importance of the means. Now it is needless to point out which theory answers to this description, that which regards the connexion as always certain, or that which maintains it to be in certain cases contingent. We see, therefore, that the Necessitarian is more consistent in trusting to means than the Libertarian, and, therefore, will be more likely zealously to employ them. We may illustrate this by two examples. What should the most lead a parent anxiously to surround his children with virtuous influences, inculcate upon them sound and elevated maxims, and observe towards them uniformly a just, affectionate, and altogether judicious conduct? Is it the firm persuasion, built upon the necessary connexion of causes and effects, that, if he cannot thus secure their turning out *well* in after life, he at least insures their turning out better than were he to follow an opposite course; or is it the opinion that, his children being possessed of free will, they will have just the same moral power to resist temptation and conduct themselves well when they are grown up, however they may have been trained? Which man, again, should avoid circumstances of temptation and dangerous trains of thought—he who, taught by experience, believes in the *necessary* influence of such indulgences upon his character, or he who so trusts his will's self-determining power, as to imagine that, whatever the occupation of his time and mind to-day, he will be just as well able to command a proper frame and conduct to-morrow? These questions answer themselves.

“Thus, we see, if the doctrine of necessity describes

the future lot and conduct of men as objectively certain, therefore necessary, it does not therefore make it independent of the volitions of the men themselves; on the contrary, it points out how necessary are these links in the chain that conducts to the eventual result. If it is objectively certain that a particular man shall live to be ninety years old, it is not that he shall live to that age whether he takes care of his health, and guards himself against accidents, or not; but it is that he *will*, to a certain extent, take this care, as well as be shielded by Providence from dangers which he cannot avoid.

“Now, that all events *are* objectively certain has been elsewhere proved to be a necessary deduction from the universal foreknowledge of God. If He knows that a thing will be, then it certainly will be—that is, is objectively certain. If this is true of one thing, it must be so of all. If, therefore, it be objected, ‘Though the great events of a man’s life, such as the time of his death, are certain, yet as the same events may be brought about by various concurrences of causes, it is not necessary that each particular volition which will actually tend to produce them should also be necessary; it is only that each, as it arises, is made use of to bring about a result which might have been otherwise effected’—to such a suggestion we reply, that besides involving other serious difficulties, it would either make the prescience of God imperfect, as not extending to minute details, or it would most unphilosophically do away in certain cases with that connexion between foreknowledge and objective certainty, on the one hand, or of objective certainty and necessity, on the other, which we have seen to be strictly inevitable. It is true that, hypothetically, the same particular event might, in most cases, be brought about

by various means; but as it is objectively certain by what special means it *will* be brought about, these means are as *necessary* as the event itself.

“We have now to consider what it is that makes all events objectively certain; and as before we were careful to shew that the will of *man* was not to be excluded from influencing results, so must we now, even more carefully, guard against the supposition that the will of God is powerless—another form of the doctrine of fatality. It is not that God foresees all the future as certainly decreed by some blind fate, and cannot interfere to alter its course: its whole course is subjectively certain to Him only because He himself has decreed it. If He were to decree it to be different, it would be different. It is true that, certain results being determined, there is reason to doubt whether it depends entirely on the arbitrary will of God what means He shall employ to bring them about, as this would imply there was no *ground* for preference on His part. But this ground of preference rests in the eternal fitness of things to which God conforms, and not in any properties in created objects that are inalienable and held independent of His will. Accordingly, in miracles He reverses in special cases the properties *usually* inherent in them: in such instances He departs from what we call the laws of nature.

“The objective certainty of all actuality, therefore, springs from the will of God. But we must go further back still. The will of God, like that of His creatures, to be intelligent and moral, must be determined by motives; these motives take their rise from His character, and this character springs, as does His being, from that primal necessity where Reason, having led us back to this her starting point, resigns us to her parent, Faith.

“Yes! I avow myself an ultra-Necessitarian. I believe we are all bound together, God and His universe, by a band of blessed, blessed necessity—a necessity which will be a mystery and a joy to an ever unrolling eternity—a rock firmer than adamant, on which we may build, secure against the possibility of change—a law eternal, sublime, and unexceptioned, of a freedom to transgress which we are not, and happily never shall be, conscious.”

CHAPTER XVII.

SECOND DISCUSSION ON THE WILL.

Two days after the last recorded conversation, Frederic called Elizabeth aside soon after breakfast, saying, "Courthope and I are to have another discussion this morning. Will you join us?"

"I shall like it exceedingly."

"Be in the library, then, at eleven."

Mr Courthope began the discussion at this time by saying, "The first thing to settle on this point clearly is, What do we mean by liberty as applied to the will?"

Fred.—"Exactly. Will you allow me, in connexion with this, to begin by giving you two or three definitions of terms, according to what appears to me the just view. Speaking generally, power I would describe as a subjective capacity, physical, intellectual, and moral, to accomplish results; liberty, as the absence of any hindrance from without in the accomplishment. Power, which I have described as a single idea, is in reality composed of various capacities: intellect, which supplies ideas; character, which supplies motives; will, which receives the action of these motives, and transmits it to those parts of the bodily frame which perform the outward acts. Liberty, as here described, has only to do with the carrying out of these outward acts, and does not bear in the least on the internal process of volition. That process is like all natural processes, in one sense

free, in another, necessary; and this freedom and this necessity do not in the slightest degree clash. It is free, because there is not only a being acted on, but there is *action*: it is necessary, because, being a law of our nature, it can only act in a certain mode imposed on it by our Creator. The will really does act—all acts that are *our own* spring from its action; but it must act according to its nature—that is, from the impulse of motives. Whatever internal action may exist free from the force of motives, you must give to it some other name than that of will; for it is part of the very idea of an act of will that it springs from a motive. There is another kind of freedom, if people choose so to call it, which is included in the very nature of the will—it is this, that we have the motives *within* ourselves, in our own being. It is not another man's truth, love, hatred, self-sacrifice, or self-indulgence, but our own, which produce the acts of our will. It is this which makes us not automaton: it is in this sense, and in this sense alone, we are free. To give an instance. I feel intense gratitude towards a man who has rendered me a great service, and am impelled by this feeling to load him with benefits. I do not feel the less free in these acts because of the force of the principle which necessitates them. Had it been by the command of another I acted, it would have been otherwise. To come to the point: the only liberty which, in my view, belongs to acts of will as such, is the liberty of spontaneity, or liberty from co-action. Sir William Hamilton, in his 'Notes on Reid,' (p. 601,) has, I think, very justly observed [turning up the place], that 'the definition of liberty given by the celebrated advocate of moral freedom, Dr Samuel Clarke, is, in reality, only that of the liberty of spontaneity—

viz., "The power of self-motion or action, which, in all animate agents, is spontaneity; is, in moral or rational agents, what we properly call liberty." Now this liberty, Sir William observes, at the beginning of this note, 'is admitted by all parties, is common equally to brutes and men, is not a peculiar quality of the will, and is, in fact, essential to it, for the will cannot possibly be forced.' I maintain, and shall afterwards endeavour to prove, that this is the only liberty of which we can any of us be directly *conscious*. But so far from this liberty being contrary to necessity, as Sir William Hamilton observes, 'the *greatest spontaneity* is, in fact, the *greatest necessity*. Thus, a hungry horse, who turns of necessity to food, is said, on this definition of liberty, to do so with freedom, because he does so spontaneously; and, in general, the desire of happiness, which is the most necessary tendency, will, on this application of the term, be the most free.' In another note further on, Sir William remarks, that 'as to will is to act, and as man is not free to live or not to live, so neither, absolutely speaking, is he free to act or not to act. As he lives, he is necessarily determined to act or energise, to think and will. The root of his freedom is thus necessity.' But Reid and Libertarians generally claim a liberty anterior to this of spontaneity, viz., a liberty from necessity. I shall give you Reid's definition of it. 'In every voluntary action,' he says, 'the determination of the will is the first part of the action, upon which alone the moral estimation of it depends. It has been made a question among philosophers, Whether, in every instance, this determination be the necessary consequence of the constitution of the person, and the circumstances in which he is placed; or whether he had not power, in many cases, to determine

this way or that?' [Independently, of course, of this constitution and these circumstances.] 'Whether this notion of moral liberty,' he adds, 'be conceivable or not, every man must judge for himself. To me there appears no difficulty in conceiving it.' On this Sir William has a note, 'To conceive a *free act*, is to conceive an act which, being a *cause*, is not itself an *effect*; in other words, to conceive an absolute commencement. But is such by us conceivable?' Now, I am not sure but that the thing is, on the principle of a limitation of conception, on which I must say more another time, conceivable; but I object to it as irreconcilable with first principles. I go on with Reid. 'I consider the determination of the will as an effect. This effect must have a cause which had power to produce it; and the cause must be either the person himself whose will it is, or some other being. The first is as easily conceived as the last. If the person was the cause of that determination of his own will, he was free in that action.' Here is another note by Sir William. 'Only if he were not determined to that determination. But is the person an *original undetermined* cause of the determination of his will? If he be not, then he is not a *free agent*, and the scheme of necessity is admitted. If he be, in the first place it is impossible to *conceive* the possibility of this; and, in the second, if the fact, though inconceivable, be allowed, it is impossible to see how a *cause, undetermined by any motive*, can be a *rational, moral, and accountable cause*.' This difficulty is stated before in Sir William's first note on this section, which I shall read entire, as it gives his own conclusions on the subject. 'Moral liberty does not merely consist in the power of *doing what we will*, but in the power of *willing what we*

will. For a power over the determination of our Will supposes an act of Will that our Will should determine so and so; for we can only freely exert power through a rational determination or volition. This definition of liberty is right. But then question upon question remains (and this *ad infinitum*)—Have we a power (a will) over such anterior will? and until this question be definitely answered, which it never can, we must be *unable to conceive the possibility of the fact of liberty*. But, though inconceivable, this fact is not therefore false. For there are many contradictories (and, of contradictories *one must*, and *one only can*, be true) of which we are equally unable to conceive the possibility of either. The philosophy, therefore, which I profess annihilates the theoretical problem—How is the scheme of liberty, or the scheme of necessity, to be rendered comprehensible?—by shewing that both schemes are equally inconceivable; but it establishes liberty practically as a fact, by shewing that it is either itself an immediate *datum*, or is involved in an immediate *datum*, of consciousness.' We see, then, that this profound and sublime intellect, firmly wedded as it is to self-determination, only founds its belief on the equal inconceivability of the opposite doctrine, and the supposed testimony of consciousness. Sir William, therefore, having himself demolished all the other arguments in favour of Libertarianism, it only remains for me to remove from under it these two remaining props. In my paper which you read, I have dwelt on this question of consciousness. Let me now ask you, Mr Courthope, candidly, Does your consciousness inform you that your several volitions are absolute commencements—things unconnected with external circumstances or internal motives?"

Mr C.—"No, I do not say——."

Fred.—"Feel? Let us keep just now to what we actually feel."

Mr C.—"Well, I do not feel that my volitions are independent of those things; but I feel that it depends on myself whether I yield to them or not."

Fred.—"That is to say you feel that you are not *forced* to yield to them: there is no co-action. Yet there surely is something in your own nature, in your own moral constitution, which necessitates your being thus influenced, and this necessity, far from diminishing your moral freedom, is that which constitutes its morality. Do you feel that your moral acts are less free than your indifferent ones? We will take a particular case. The benevolence of your nature obliges you to exert yourself for the good of others; you cannot see suffering without wishing to relieve it—is the wish, therefore, or the particular volitions it may induce, not free?"

Mr C.—"I cannot help acting thus and willing thus; but what I maintain is, that I could if I would."

Fred.—"By simple self-determination of the will?—I will try you. Take up that penknife and will to stab me. I know very well you can if you will; but how to will, that is the question. I call upon the self-determining power of your will. Make yourself will to stab me. You see you cannot do it. But what your will cannot do for itself, I might, if my own nature did not hold me back, bring you to will, by taking up this sword and plunging it at you. The motives of self-defence and of revenge against a cowardly act of assassination might then make you will to stab me."

Mr C.—"But you called on me to act without a motive, nay, against motives. I do not deny the necessity

of motive; but what I maintain is, that we are free to choose our motives. Surely we are often conscious of such a state."

Fred.—"I think we are often conscious of a state of hesitation between various inducements; but I maintain that it must be by the action of reason or conscience upon the will, and not by a simple determination of the will itself, that we shall come to a decision. I will now suppose another case. That you met me in a lonely road, without means of defence, and with, as you knew, a hundred pounds in my pocket. Here would be a motive to kill me, and in a sense you may say that you would choose between the motives of avarice and honour, but practically, from what I know of you, I maintain that you would be *obliged* to spare me as surely as in my own room. You could not choose in any way but one between these motives. Your will's self-determining power would be as powerless in the second case as in the first. With respect to what has been termed choosing in things indifferent, Jonathan Edwards has well pointed out the fallacy lurking in the confusion between indifference respecting the *objects* themselves, and indifference respecting the act of choice. We can never choose an object without some motive for making a choice. For instance, a girl threading a necklace of perfectly similar beads, is indifferent as to the succession of the beads, but is not indifferent to the act of at each moment picking up one. In order to this, she must at each moment choose one; but which particular one she *shall* choose will be determined, independent of her will, by one bead more prominently than the rest obtruding itself at the moment of determination on her eye or mind. It thus appears that even in matters indifferent, the determina-

tion to choose at all, and the special choice made, neither springs *directly* from the will itself."

Mr C.—"Truly, it appears almost impossible to escape from the grasp of necessity; and yet, how thus account for the feeling of guilt? It has often seemed to me there is an error vitiating much of the theology of the present day, namely, a merging of the idea of guilt in one of simple defection. I should like to be satisfied that your scheme of necessity is free from this charge. I met with an illustration somewhere which beautifully exemplifies what I consider the true view. It supposed two Greek girls, whose æsthetic taste had been gradually brought to a high degree of perfection, and who had each formed a very correct and exalted ideal standard of beauty. One of the girls was beautiful, and the other deformed; but neither had ever seen herself in a mirror, nor knew what her outward appearance was. At last one day a mirror is presented to them, and each one sees herself to be as she really is. What will the feelings of the deformed one be? They will not partake of self-blame, but simply of sadness and self-pity that she should have been made so to differ from the standard which her own mind supplied. Now, imagine the case of another girl who had indulged in habits of deception and disobedience towards her mother, and whose moral sense had been so blinded that she did not see her own deformity, till at last she had been brought, by some peculiarly strong temptation, to the brink of an act of flagrant guilt, when she herself suddenly awoke to the evil of her course, and saw her past character and conduct as in a mirror. Are her feelings now like those of the physically unbeautiful girl? No, she does not pity, she blames herself. Her emotions are not those of

regret, but of remorse, because she knew she could have done otherwise had she chosen. Now, would not the doctrine of necessity, if carried out to its legitimate, logical conclusions, make the second case similar to the first? I know that many Necessitarians, and both of you are decided instances of it, have as strong a perception of guilt as any Libertarian; but it is by no means a rare thing to see men better than their creed."

Fred.—"I shall answer you best by analysing your illustration, when I think you will see that there is an essential difference between the two cases, quite independent of considerations of liberty and necessity. The first is a case of physical, the second of moral deformity; and in the investigation of a moral question, it is the latter class of cases alone which are admissible. A case much more in point, to which an idiot's might form an approximation, would be that of one, who, with degraded propensities and passions, had no moral sense to guide, nor will to control them. If we could suppose such an one suddenly supplied with these last, and mentally contemplating his past self, we can imagine that he too would look on himself with a feeling of pity mingled with one of *ethical*, as in the girl there must have been one of *aesthetic*, disgust; but there certainly would not be a feeling of blame, because there had been no inner standard of right and wrong. There is this distinction between the ideas of good and evil and those respectively of right and wrong, that these last suppose a moral *standard* which is adhered to or departed from, and this adhesion or departure call forth respectively praise and blame. Now, as contrasted with this case, let us analyse that of the deceitful girl. She does blame herself, as we shall all agree, because she had an inward moral stan-

dard from which she voluntarily deviated; for both Libertarians and Necessitarians agree that a sense of duty is simply this, the obligation which every being possessed of a moral sense (or an intellectual perception of what is right) lies under to conform in will and affections to that moral sense. The intellectual perception alone suffices to constitute the obligation: it would be absurd to say that it depended on the possession of those *moral qualities* in the individual which answer its requirements. The girl knew that she *ought* to love, obey, and deal openly with her mother, and never would have thought of saying, as the advocates of free will would say for her, that she was free of guilt because she did not possess those high principles of moral rectitude which, along with a comparative weakness of the lower propensities, would have led her so to act. Those who maintain this are in reality chargeable with banishing the idea of guilt from the universe, for they require that in order to constitute guilt which would make guilt morally impossible. But if, on the other hand, the Libertarian says, The girl was guilty, but her guilt consisted in her not choosing, by a simple exercise of will, the good, independent of any inducement, physical or moral; then I must say that the Libertarian makes the girl guilty for not doing what was physically impossible; for it is physically impossible for the will to choose anything by a mere exercise of will."

Mr C.—"According to one view it would have needed a physical impossibility for the girl to do right; according to the other, a moral impossibility: but in both there was an impossibility, and yet she was to blame."

Fred.—"Yes, but its being a moral and not a physical impossibility, is what constitutes the real difference.

Guilt is a moral evil, and if moral evil ceases to be moral evil, because, while things remained as they were, it was impossible it should not have been, then there is no such thing as reality in the universe; for in that high sense in which we are now speaking, nothing is possible but what *is*; for all hangs together by a law universal and eternal."

Elizabeth.—"Edwards has, I think, most finely shewn that while God is necessarily what He is independent of His own will, for His character is as eternal as His will, He is not for that less really good, holy, loving. So, because everything in the universe is necessary, it is not for that the less real."

Mr C.—"The subject is certainly opening itself more clearly to me now than ever before; but I wish to have *all* my difficulties removed. [To Frederic]—Have you read that article I shewed you yesterday?"

Fred. (turning to Elizabeth).—"Mr Courthope refers to an interesting review of a work entitled 'The Will, Divine and Human,' by Thomas Solly. I will read a passage to you. Solly quotes Reid. 'The moral perfection of the Deity consists not in having no power to do ill, otherwise, as Dr Clarke justly observes, there would be no ground to thank Him for His goodness to us, any more than for His eternity and immensity; but His moral perfection consists in this, that when He has power to do everything, a power which cannot be resisted, He exerts that power only in doing what is wisest and best.'—*Reid's Essays on the Active Powers*, Essay iv. chap. iv. On the expression 'To do everything,' Sir William Hamilton has this note—'To do everything consistent with His perfection. But here one of the insoluble contradictions arises; for if, on the one hand,

we attribute to the Deity the power of moral evil, we detract from His essential goodness, and if, on the other, we deny Him this power, we detract from His omnipotence.'—*Hamilton's Reid*, p. 609. Solly remarks, 'In the above passages, Reid's text seems to me to contain a sounder view than the commentator's note. The power to do evil does not detract from the goodness of the Deity, as long as it remains unexercised, any more than my power to kill a man makes me at all the worse morally, provided I never attempt it. But if it be urged that the power to do evil detracts from His essential goodness, meaning thereby goodness that is necessary, and not chosen freely in preference to evil, then I would observe that such moral goodness is neither man's nor God's, as freedom is essential to all moral goodness.' Now, on all this I have to remark that Reid's definition of the moral perfections of the Deity appears to me, as to Mr Solly, perfectly sound, if we understand him to mean by His having power to do everything [in itself possible], the physical power. Understanding it thus, we do not require Sir William Hamilton's restriction, 'to do everything consistent with His perfection,' for God has the physical power to do things totally contrary to His perfections, and by allowing Him *this* power, we do not in the least detract from His essential goodness. It is clear, however, that Sir William understands by power here a freedom from all necessity, natural or moral. Now, there appears to me to be embodied in this conception something which is really contradictory of the radical idea of power, which is ability to exert force. Now, if force be exerted, there must be not only an absence of outward hindrance, but the presence of inward impulse; and this impulse, if it act at all, must act in

some particular direction. Thus, if God had no greater impulse towards good than towards evil, He could not *act* at all: He would, in fact, be destitute of the *power* of action. It is as impossible to conceive the coincidence of motion and rest as that of action and indifference. A definite moral character therefore, which, with its undivided force, can determine the will only towards good, instead of detracting from the power of God is an integral part of it."

Mr C.—"But surely there is some substance in the objection (it is not all shadow) which suggests itself to the mind, that to suppose anything external to the will of God, on which it depends, is to take away from the power of that will."

Fred.—"In that sense all adaptation diminishes power, because adaptation supposes limitation. But while in this wide sense *power* is impaired, *perfection* is increased. But just as, however in this general sense it would add to the power, it would by no means increase the perfection of the affections that they supplied the objects, or the qualities in the objects, which called them forth, while still they are dependent on these objects and these qualities for their own exercise; so does it not in the least derogate from the perfection of will—and I speak now of will in the abstract, not of the Divine or human in particular—that it cannot exist but as elicited and directed by something independent of itself. It is of the very nature of will that it is posterior to motive. That philosophy which makes pure will the origin of all, is, of course, to be traced to the desire to impart a certain independence to the eternal decrees and attributes of God. But while this theory does violence to the nature of will itself, which, as consciousness informs us,

cannot act without something external and anterior to itself to incite it, I see not that anything is gained by it in the way of solution. We have still, in the first place, to account for the existence of the supreme will. If it, the great cause of all, must have been for ever uncaused, why may not the Divine character, with its eternal holiness, truth, justice, love, have been uncaused also? And secondly, we have to explain how arbitrary will, uninfluenced by moral considerations, should have produced the actual, and not totally opposite moral results. I do not mean to say that the Necessitarian doctrine can in the very least *account* for that sublime and enrapturing mystery; all I maintain is, that the ultra-Libertarian view does so no better, while it adds more and insuperable difficulties of its own."

Mr C.—"I think one chief ground of all Libertarian schemes is, the strong disposition which we all possess to trace praise and blame eventually to the *will*, and to feel that it, and it alone, is the seat of merit and demerit."

Fred.—"But this is not pure will, but will governed by motives. Let us suppose the case of one man saving another from drowning. The rescued man prostrates himself in gratitude before his preserver, blessing him for his benevolent self-forgetful act. He, however, refuses the homage, declaring that he was neither influenced by the desire to save his fellow-creature on the one hand, nor deterred by considerations of his own safety on the other; it was an act of pure will, and in that did its merit consist. Would the man rise in your estimation? There is a class of instances, indeed, in which we, at first sight, may seem to set a man's will above his affections, as more truly his own. Suppose a man possessing a hasty temper, but also such high principle as will not

suffer him to give way to it, but, on the contrary, causing him, by resolute self-discipline, at length to get the mastery of it, here, we may say, we do not blame the man for his irritable temper, as it does not affect his will; indeed, as giving scope for such noble self-control, it rather enhances our admiration of his character. But then, after all, it is not the pure will which we admire, it is the moral principle which, being stronger than the temper, regulates the will, of which, in its origin, it was quite independent."

Mr. C.—"How do you explain appeals to the will? What do these avail if the will *necessarily* obeys the strongest motive?"

Fred.—"The appeal is never directly to the will, but indirectly through the motives which influence it. You may, by earnest and judicious appeals to a certain set of motives, rouse them to greater energy than the others, and thus render them for the time, at any rate, the stronger, so that the will will yield to them. A man has great power over himself, too, in this manner, by deliberately cultivating the preferable motives. The will cannot choose its motives in its present and immediate acts, for by the time the *choice* is made the motives are determined; but by fostering certain motives more than others, it may greatly influence its future acts, and really modify the character. Now this in a measure self-formed character does often excite more of our sympathy and admiration than that which was obtained from nature without any effort, in virtue of the strength and interest conferred by struggle. It is in this way chiefly that *principle* arises, as distinguished from mere disposition. But in all this the will is only an instrument; it works *by*, as well as *on*, what is out of itself."

Mr C.—"Well, I must confess I do not see—though that may be from my own dulness—how there can be any blame attached to us, on the one hand, for possessing a temper which we did not give ourselves, nor, on the other, any merit in overcoming it by means of a moral nature which we did not originate."

Fred.—"I should wish you clearly to see, in the first place, my dear friend, that nothing is gained towards the solution of the difficulty by the Libertarian hypothesis; for besides that it is the clear testimony of *experience* and *fact*, that the will has its impulses supplied to it from the character—even if, for argument's sake, we should suppose it otherwise, and the will was left to act strictly alone, I think I proved before it could not in that case act at all. There are certain—I will not say ultra-Necessitarians (for the doctrine properly understood cannot, I think, be carried too far), but I would call them extra-Necessitarians, carrying the doctrine into what is not its province, who judge that, because in the great scheme a being must be and do just what he actually is and does, therefore praise and blame are alike inappropriate. But these reasoners deprive themselves of the only objective explanation of the great fact of the *universality* of the ideas of merit and demerit, their foundation in truth, and they also mistake the subjective meaning of these ideas. In this case, as President Edwards has said, the common sense of the majority of mankind is nearer the mark than the subtlety of objectors in either class of philosophers. The universal sense in all of normal development, with very rare exceptional cases, of duty as an obligation to conform to an immutable law of right, as this is declared and confirmed by the moral sense, is the sole and sufficient ground of praise, so far

as the will and affections conform, and of blame, so far as they depart from this rule; and, as respects particular acts, all that is required in forming a judgment is to know the nature and amount of motive in them. As regards the motive, it is its moral nature as an actuality, and not its metaphysical nature as original or derived, the product of law (necessity) or of chance, which is considered."

Mr C.—"It seems, however, as if we had more power over things as contingent than as necessary. But you would remind me that we can have no power over the origin of things in ourselves, for that would require us to exist out of ourselves."

Elizabeth.—"I think, Frederic, in order to treat the subject fully, you should refer to Mr Erskine's views."

Fred.—"Yes, especially as from the unaffected piety and remarkable amiability of the man, even more than his eminent talents, he has a great and spreading influence. You once made an abstract, my love, of his arguments against Jonathan Edwards, as given in his own work on 'Election.' Could you lay your hands on it now?"

Elizabeth.—"I think I can."

Elizabeth returned with the manuscript-book, in which the abstract alluded to was written, and read it out.

"SUBSTANCE OF MR ERSKINE'S ARGUMENTS.

"The radical error of Jonathan Edwards' work is not considering what constitutes man a moral being, what conscience is, or the condition of man in consequence of having a conscience. He considers all men as born heirs of a nature possessed exclusively by a corrupt will, and entirely unable to resist it without a new and special power from without; and thus the only result of Christ's

redemption is, that God can consistently with justice apply its benefits to whomsoever He chooses. He persuades himself and many others that this is compatible with true liberty and responsibility. The truth is, his definition of liberty is incomplete and erroneous. He says, 'Liberty is the power or advantage that any one has to do or conduct as he pleases,' which applies equally well to a beast as to a man; for all that is necessary is an inclination to act, and the power to act accordingly. It is this definition's having been passed over, and remaining unquestioned, which has caused his success as a theological metaphysician. Thus, as along with the inclination to do evil the power also is left to the reprobate, the condition of man as the highest Calvinism represents him, is, according to him, consistent with liberty and responsibility. But if we give a true definition of liberty, it entirely alters the case. If I wish to remove an animal from one part of a field to another, I have only to remove his food to the latter place, and his own impulse will lead him there. This is exactly Edwards' definition of liberty; and thus we see he makes no difference between the blind liberty of the beast and the rational liberty of man. In like manner a ruler may manage his fellow-men, and may make use of their passions and interests for his own purposes, which they do not know, and cannot sympathise with. In both cases the subjects enjoy the power of doing as they please; but they cannot properly be called free, because they are ignorant of the dominant purpose which their actions and their private purposes subserve. But the animal is incapable of any higher freedom. Not so man. The ruler may make the men below him co-operators and friends, and not use them as unconscious instruments. If this

happens, they are free indeed. The idea of liberty which here opens on us is, that it consists in an agreement of choice with regard to the dominant purpose of our acting with the directing mind, and the capacity of liberty thus consists in a capacity for this sympathy. But for this sympathy it is necessary that the object of the ruler should not be opposed to the interests of those whom he wishes to promote it. To obtain their voluntary co-operation it is requisite his aim should embrace their advantage also. If one admit the principle, that to be free we must sympathise with our ruler, we must carry it up to the head of creation ; for whilst there remains a purpose more dominant than that with which we are acquainted, we are still in bondage. Thus we must make the purpose of the Ruler of the universe *our own* before we can be truly free. The reason why a beast cannot be free under any management is, that *he has not a human spirit*, and cannot enter into a human purpose, though it may be for his good. Men can be free under the government of their fellow-men, because they have human spirits, and can *sympathise with human purposes*. Can we, then, be free under God's government? For this two conditions are evidently necessary—1. The communication of God's Spirit to enter into His purpose ; 2. That *that* should be one that embraces our good. Further, I do not believe man could be free unless the Spirit of God communicated to him were one of righteousness, and God's purpose that he should be righteous. True liberty exists only when what ought to rule does rule, and we all feel that God's service is liberty, not merely because it is willing, but because God is righteous. When a man knows in his own heart what is right for himself to do, he also feels that he ought to do it ; and

if he is living in the flesh, and so is prevented from doing it by the thought either of pleasure or pain, or by the hope or fear of anything that may happen in consequence of his doing it, he is truly in bondage, and he has a consciousness of being so. When we consider and use all the circumstances of our being as opportunities given us by God of co-operating with Him and His purpose concerning us that we should be righteous, then we are free, and we walk at liberty, keeping His precepts; when we follow any other course, though we may seem to be exercising our liberty, we are really throwing it away, and yielding ourselves to be used by God as we use the lower animals, in unconscious subserviency to a purpose which, although it can only be accomplished in our own individual cases by our consenting to abandon all other pleas and adopt it as our own, is yet, through the all-wise control of God, who makes the wrath of man to praise Him, advanced in the general, even by the doings of those who are most opposed to it, as we have seen exemplified in the case of Pharaoh."

Fred.—"Mr Erskine's reasoning on this occasion, with no real disingenuousness on his part, reminds me strongly of the saying which has been ascribed to Talleyrand, that language was made to deceive. It is founded mainly on a word-fallacy. Jonathan Edwards speaks of liberty, and Mr Erskine speaks of liberty, but these are perfectly distinct each from each, while also perfectly compatible. Edwards undertook to treat of that metaphysical liberty which belongs to the will as such—not of the liberty which belongs to a will possessed of certain sympathy or certain knowledge, which is the liberty spoken of by Mr Erskine—the attribute of man as man, and not of man as placed under certain circum-

stances. His liberty was a liberty to act from motives, as distinguished from the Arminian notion of a liberty to act without motives, or from indifference; but Mr Erskine would include in the essential idea of liberty the acting, or the capacity of acting, from certain high motives. Jonathan Edwards never says that liberty is the only necessary condition for responsibility; he plainly adds those of reason and conscience, which man possesses, and not the brute. But what he maintained was, that while those faculties required for their exercise a liberty such as he described, this was the only liberty which, they themselves being judges, they required for responsibility in such exercise. Mr Erskine complains of Edwards' notion of liberty, that it is precisely that whereby a beast is led to go to a particular part of a field by means of food; but the only parallelism which Edwards would find in the two cases is the necessity of acting from the strongest motive; and he proves, by a force of reasoning which cannot be repelled, that this rule applies to all willing agents, from the Supreme God to the meanest of His creatures. Now if there is any force in Mr Erskine's objections, they imply not only that man is capable of a higher liberty than these—for this he could not, in any candour, charge Edwards with denying—but they also signify that this higher, this moral liberty is necessary for responsibility. Let us examine the case, as by him propounded, of the ruler and the subject. If the former made use of the passions of the latter to produce certain evil results not by him contemplated, and made him responsible for these last, of course there would be gross injustice. But that is not supposed; on the contrary, as there is evident reference to the Supreme Ruler, the supposition is rather that of

a *good* end subserved, of which the subject was the unconscious instrument. The great force of Mr Erskine's objection lies, however, in this, that, by means of the motives presented to him, the man is made to draw down evil to himself, while working out good to the world. Now that such a condition well deserves the name of bondage, I will not deny; but the question is, Does it affect responsibility? Clearly not; for that only deals with sin as existing, and has nothing to do with the causes of its existence, on the one hand, nor the further consequences, good or evil, resulting from it on the other. In other words, the question is not one which affects *posterior*, though it is undoubtedly, in my opinion, intimately connected with *anterior* justice. If, however, the moral liberty which contrasts with this bondage were reinstated in its proper position, as a privilege which God is neither bound to grant, nor does in reality grant to men generally, but which all should pray for and labour to obtain, the descriptions of the blessing, and the conclusions drawn therefrom by Mr Erskine, contain much that is truly beautiful and edifying."

Elizabeth.—"There is one thing I have observed, which, so far as it goes, in itself speaks in favour of the doctrine of Necessity—the complete satisfaction it gives to those who thoroughly embrace it. There are many thoughtful, earnest, and highly-conscientious men who are perfectly sure that this is the true key to the riddle; because, by means of it, all shines out upon them as clear as the sun at mid-day; whereas Libertarians, even by their own confession, are forced at best to make a choice of difficulties. Do you not think I am right, Mr Courthope?"

Mr C.—"I suspect you are right as respects Libertarians; but you know it *may* be said, that, if Necessitarians view the question as devoid of doubt and difficulty, it is because of pride and narrowness of view in themselves."

Elizabeth.—"Ah, but I spoke of such as by their candour, and solidity, and discrimination in other things precluded such an interpretation. I am sure my husband is an instance of this. Now, Frederic, you must allow me for *once* to praise you in your presence. [Turning to Mr Courthope with heightened colour]. If there is any one thing in him—which all who know him must give him credit for—it is candour, and patient, comprehensive investigation. He belongs to no religious sect; he has nothing to bind him to the doctrine of Necessity but a conviction of its truth; and yet he is so sure of it, he could not doubt it if he would. Could you, Frederic?"

Frederic smiled and looked down; then instantly raising his eyes again, and slightly laughing, he said, "Your last expression amuses me a little by its singular appropriateness. I have sometimes, especially when arguing with men older than myself, felt for the time almost ashamed of my perfect certainty on this point. If I could but have said I leant strongly to the Necessitarian side, but it was a very mysterious subject, and there was much to urge on both sides.—But I really could not pretend to regard it so."

Elizabeth.—"Is it possible you have felt that? I have done exactly the same; and I, as a woman, found it still more inconvenient. You know my father is an out and out Necessitarian, and it was one of the first subjects I gave my whole mind to investigate. I ended in being thoroughly convinced; so when any one, per-

haps some very learned man, has happened to broach it in conversation with me, and said it was a very mysterious and difficult subject—by *difficult* clearly meaning doubtful—all I could do, you know, was to maintain a modest silence.”

Fred.—“To be sure. You were like a child that, after being thoroughly taught the first four rules of arithmetic, met with a philosopher, highly educated perhaps in other things, but who, by some strange chance, only knew the rule of addition. A sum of subtraction is worked before both the philosopher and the child; he turns to her and says, ‘It is very difficult to make that out.’ She thinks, ‘That must be because you have not learnt the rule;’ but she says nothing.”

Mr C.—“Well, I wish, Mrs Somers, you could teach me the rule, and give me certainty one way or the other; for I hate doubt. I am no German in that respect, though they do accuse me at home of being German-mad.”

Fred.—“That longing for certainty gives me more hopes of you than anything. A hunger for truth is a noble appetite.”

Elizabeth.—“I cannot at all understand the Germans. They are on all hands allowed to be an honest, sincere, conscientious people; but how that consists with their absolute *indulgence* of uncertainty I cannot conceive. There are some men who have no relish for game, and yet are eager at the chase. That reminds me of the Germans in their pursuit of truth.”

Mr C.—“I have no sympathy with that mental temperament. I have an ardent, deep-seated love for truth. If I was offered, on the one hand, immortality and error, and, on the other, truth and death, truth and death would be my unhesitating choice.”

Elizabeth (with kindling eyes).—"How I rejoice to hear you speak so! There are times when I have felt—I could scarcely venture to say it was my constant feeling—that truth was not only better, but dearer to me, inexpressibly dearer, than happiness, or love, or anything in the universe besides."

Fred.—"It is a delightful assurance that in the heavenly state our knowledge will be *perfect*: we shall know even as we are known. Many seem to overlook this, and to expect that the chase for truth will continue still. To me it is a more delightful expectation, that we shall rest in ecstatic joy in its possession. I mean as respects the past: we may still, throughout a long eternity, *behold* new beauties and wonders, as new worlds unfold beneath the creating hand of God; or we may ourselves be agents in carrying out certain parts of the eternal plan; for our rest, while entirely free from care and unsatisfaction in every shape, will not assuredly be one of indolence."

CHAPTER XVIII.

MR WHITE REVIEWED—ELIZABETH'S FEARS—
OMNIAGENCY.

Mr Somers to Mr Merton.

"DEAR MERTON,—You may remember directing my attention, a few months ago, to some strictures on Mr White's work, 'Life in Christ,' contained in the *Eclectic Review* for January 1847. I presume you had seen the article yourself. If so, you will not be surprised to hear that I read it with much indignation. Experience of the manner in which even the excellent of the earth too often permit themselves to speak and think of those holding what they deem heterodox views, prevented much *surprise* on the present occasion, but strong and earnest condemnation I certainly felt.

"My object, however, in referring to the subject just now, is to call your attention to one peculiarly captious charge brought forward in the *Review*, and still sustained in the reply to Mr White's letter in the February number.

"The reviewer had before objected to Mr White's title ['Life in Christ; or, Four Discourses on the Scripture Doctrine, that Immortality is the Peculiar Privilege of the Regenerate'], as assuming the point he had to prove—that immortality, in its literal sense, is the peculiar privilege of the regenerate. Now, it is no uncom-

mon thing for an author to convey, in the title of his work, the conclusion he has come to after reasoning on the subject; neither, so far as I know, has this ever before been condemned. It does not imply that there has been any unwarranted assumption at the beginning of the train of reasoning in the work, nor that that has been conducted with less candour and modesty than would otherwise have been expected. I, for my part, however, should certainly from the beginning have understood Mr White's title as assuming only the mutually acknowledged fact that *there is* an immortality which is the peculiar privilege of the righteous, the question being in the work itself discussed what that immortality consisted in. And in his short, gentle, Christian-like letter to the then editor of the *Eclectic*, in the February number, Mr White declares that such was the fact. This gentleman, however, will not receive this explanation—seems to think he knows Mr White's mind better than he does himself—and tells him 'that he knows that he used the title, not in the Scripture sense of eternal blessedness—in which sense he had no controversy with the orthodox churches, and no novelty of opinion to present—but in the sense of the philosophers—simply immortal existence; and in that sense it was taken as an offensive assumption of a point denied by all others, and yet to be substantiated by himself.'

"Thus Mr White is at once to be blamed for having made an 'offensive assumption' of his own novel opinion in his title, and to be disbelieved when he declares he did not make that assumption; for no other reason, apparently, than that it would have been so inconsistent not to have made it as to be absolutely incredible, even on a declaration to that effect from himself!

“There is another point, more important than the choice of a title, on which Mr White seems to me to have been misunderstood. He objects to the representation of his opinion in the review, as maintaining ‘that death had virtual possession of man before his fall;’ but states his view to be that ‘Adam was not created in the possession of immortality, but neither was he created under a definite sentence of death.’ After this the editor asks, ‘What can be the meaning of the sentence, but that the time was not fixed?’ Now this is a meaning of the words which, I think, would have suggested itself to few minds. The plain and natural sense of the term *definite* here has no reference to fixedness of time, but to certainty of occurrence. It was not a definite, *i. e.*, not a positive sentence, but one contingent on conduct. Some obscurity has, I think, rested on the question, from the double meaning in our language of the term ‘mortal.’ It may either mean that which *must*, or that which *may* die—has no physical immortality. Now, it was in this latter sense that Mr White said, Adam before the fall was mortal already both in body and soul. In neither respect had he any inherent and inalienable immortality, though, had obedience continued, in both he would have had a *virtual* immortality. This explains the expression, at first sight paradoxical, that man was ‘placed midway between mortality and immortality.’ The meaning is, he neither had necessary mortality nor necessary immortality, but a contingent mortality or a contingent immortality, as people may choose to express it. Thus, it will also be allowed that he was placed ‘midway between angels and the animals.’ The unfallen angels have so far a necessary immortality that God, we believe, has secured it to them; and the lower

animals have had from the beginning, we may suppose, a sentence of mortality resting on them. . . .—Ever yours,
FREDERIC SOMERS."

Elizabeth to Sophia Milwood.

"I told you once, dear friend, that I felt myself in the realm of the affections all but impervious to the shafts of fate. I guessed not the bitter darts which now, I apprehend, will pierce my heart through that of my beloved husband. I hope I am not biased in judgment by my love and reverence for him; but I confess I cannot in this case escape from his conclusions. And yet, I know that he, the pure, the good, the righteously-indignant one; whose bloods boils at oppression and wrong; whose soul shrinks from each moral taint, and loathes the very precincts of fraud—that he will be accused of ——. But I cannot write it; you will have it all laid before you. I believe, too, you will not misjudge, though you should be unable to agree with him. You have read his paper on the will and necessity. He has lately read me one in which he pursues the subject still further, and, carrying out the principles there laid down, and building on the great fundamental truth that there is but one real Power in the universe, he declares his belief in the omni-agency of God—a doctrine which, though not unknown in the Christian world, is shockingly repugnant to the major portion of it. He wishes you to see his paper; but please return it by and by, without thinking it necessary to comment on it unless you choose. I remember what you said once about its being good for us to incur the disapprobation of others. It seems to *purify* our love of truth. I shall soon leave you to the paper; but I want first to say this:—Though such writers as

Carlyle and Emerson—and Emerson is, you know, a grand favourite with my husband—do, in a certain sense, trace to God evil as well as good, and do believe in a certain optimism, as Frederic also does, yet Frederic has no sympathy whatever with that confounding of the essential difference between good and evil with which their writings are at times clearly chargeable. I know no one who more clearly and constantly, in small things as in great, holds this great distinction in view.

“My husband prefers the word pantism (from the Greek *pas*, all) to omniagency, because it is shorter, and allows of the forming on it of the adjective *pantist*.”

“DIVINE OMNIAGENCY OR PANTISM.

“The train of reasoning which I have been pursuing, relative to the will, conducts me to the objection which has been started by Libertarians, that the scheme of necessity, when carried to its full length, makes the First Cause and Supreme Orderer of all things the author of sin. Up to this point of the inquiry I have had the guidance and sanction, almost every step of the way, of the great Jonathan Edwards; but soon I shall find myself forced to diverge from him. He very justly retorts on Dr Whitby, who maintains that, ‘if sin necessarily follows from God’s withholding assistance, then God, in withholding it, must be as properly the author of it as if He were the efficient cause;’ that this difficulty equally attends the doctrine of Arminians—at least, of those among them who allow the foreknowledge of God; since, ‘for God to be the author or orderer of those things which He knows beforehand will infallibly be attended with such a consequence, is the same thing, in effect, as for Him to be the author of that consequence.’

He then goes on to say, 'They who object that this doctrine makes God the author of sin, ought distinctly to explain what they mean by the phrase, *the author of sin*. I know the phrase, as it is commonly used, signifies something very ill. If by *the author of sin* be meant *the sinner, the agent, or actor of sin, or the doer of a wicked thing*; so it would be a reproach and blasphemy to suppose God to be the author of sin. In this sense, I utterly deny God to be the author of sin; rejecting such an imputation on the Most High, as what is infinitely to be abhorred; and deny any such thing to be the consequence of what I have laid down. But if by *the author of sin* is meant the permitter, or not a hinderer of sin, and, at the same time, a disposer of the state of events in such a manner—for wise, holy, and most excellent ends and purposes—that sin, if it be permitted or not hindered, will most certainly and infallibly follow: I say, if this be all that is meant by being the author of sin (though I dislike and reject the phrase, as that which by use and custom is apt to carry another sense), it is no reproach for the Most High to be thus the author of sin. This is not to be the *actor of sin*, but, on the contrary, *of holiness*. What God doth herein is holy, and a glorious exercise of the infinite excellency of His nature. And I do not deny that God's being thus the author of sin follows from what I have laid down; and I assert, that it equally follows from the doctrine which is maintained by most of the Arminian divines.

“ ‘That it is most certainly so—that God is in such a manner the disposer and orderer of sin—is evident, if any credit is to be given to the Scripture; as well as because it is impossible, in the nature of things, to be other-

wise. In such a manner God ordered the obstinacy of Pharaoh, in his refusing to obey God's commands to let the people go—"I will harden his heart, and he shall not let the people go" (Exod. iv. 21).⁷ He then gives numerous other Scripture instances, to which I prefer returning by and by, wishing first to test the soundness of his subsequent conclusion—that 'there is a great difference between God's being concerned thus by His *permission* in an event and act, which, in the inherent subject and agent of it, is sin (though the event will certainly follow on His permission), and His being concerned in it by *producing* it and exerting the act of sin; or between His being the *orderer* of its certain existence, by *not hindering* it, under certain circumstances, and His being the proper *actor* or author of it, by a positive agency or efficiency. And this, notwithstanding what Dr Whitby offers about a saying of philosophers, that *causa deficiens, in rebus necessariis, ad causam per se efficientem reducenda est*. As there is a vast difference between the sun's being the cause of the lightsomeness and warmth of the atmosphere, and brightness of gold and diamonds, by its presence and positive influence; and its being the occasion of darkness and frost in the night, by its motion, whereby it descends below the horizon. The motion of the sun is the occasion of the latter kind of events; but it is not the proper cause, efficient, or producer of them, though they are necessarily consequent on that motion, under such circumstances. No more is any action of the Divine Being the cause of the evil of men's wills. If the sun were the proper cause of cold and darkness, it would be the *fountain* of these things, as it is the fountain of light and heat; and then something might be argued from the

nature of cold and darkness, to a likeness of nature in the sun; and it might be justly inferred that the sun itself is dark and cold, and that his beams are black and frosty. But from its being the cause no otherwise than by its departure, no such thing can be inferred, but the contrary; it may justly be argued, that the sun is a bright and hot body, if cold and darkness are found to be the consequence of its withdrawment; and the more constantly and necessarily these effects are connected with and confined to its absence, the more strongly does it argue the sun to be the fountain of light and heat. So, inasmuch as sin is not the fruit of any positive agency or influence of the Most High, but, on the contrary, arises from the withholding of His action and energy, and, under certain circumstances, necessarily follows on the want of His influence; this is no argument that He is sinful, or His operation evil, or has anything of the nature of evil; but, on the contrary, that He and His agency are altogether good and holy, and that He is the Fountain of all holiness. It would be strange arguing, indeed, because men never commit sin but only when God leaves them *to themselves*, and necessarily sin when He does so, that therefore their sin is not *from themselves*, but from God; and so, that God must be a sinful being;—as strange as would it be to argue, because it is always dark when the sun is gone, and never dark when the sun is present, that therefore all darkness is from the sun, and that his disc and beams must needs be black.'

"Now, with all deference to this great authority, it appears to me that there is a palpable fallacy introduced here. It is in effect much the same as that maintained with much ability and ingenuity by Dr Williams in his essay on 'Equity and Sovereignty'—namely, the

theory of a negative cause to account for the existence of evil. I maintain, on the other hand, that a negative cause is, properly speaking, no cause at all. Negation can do nothing but allow its opposite to work. Whatever effects a change (the essential idea of a cause) must be positive. We may, indeed, in popular language, speak of a negation as a cause, but then the effect must also be a negation. So far as the mere absence of the sun is the cause of darkness and cold, darkness and cold are simple negations; when we come to view these positively as causes of subjective phenomena—namely, sensation in sentient beings—we have to look for other causes than the absence of the sun—certain adaptations in our physical nature. In like manner the absence of Divine agency may account for the absence of holiness: it cannot explain the presence of sin. Neither can creature peccability (the negative cause which Dr Whitby puts forward), viewed only as a negation—the absence of self-sustaining innocence—account for actual sin: it only renders it possible. Accordingly, we know that, while in this sense all derived moral agents are peccable, all have not sinned. There is a body of unfallen angels. The ordinary mode, therefore, of accounting for the difference between the two great classes of created being—the lapsed and the unlapsed—that while God in His sovereign bounty preserves the latter in undeviating excellence, He leaves the former to themselves, is highly unsatisfactory.

“I believe the expression, ‘being left to oneself,’ only occurs once in our present translation of the Scriptures (Proverbs xxix. 15). But, before turning to this passage, let us consider another (2 Chron. xxxii. 31), where, as now rendered, it is simply ‘left;’ but where evidently

the words 'to himself' must be supplied. God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart.

"Now, as we must believe Hezekiah to have been a child of God, the meaning in his case seems to be, that God left him to the sway of his old nature, which in this life must always struggle with the new, and which, having been born with us, is in one sense more truly our own than the other. In this way the saint may often be left to himself—left to learn the weakness and evil of his natural heart, that he may feel his complete dependence on the Holy Spirit for all that is good, and apply for strength and guidance from Him. In the case of the child that brings his mother to shame (that in Proverbs first alluded to), the idea plainly is his not being outwardly interfered with by means of reproof and correction, but allowed to go on, following out uncontrolled the natural bias of the disposition, aided, of course, by evil influences without. The English term which the most closely corresponds with the Hebrew verb is, *sent adrift*. The frequentative sense also is present. It seems altogether to answer to the case of an unhappy neglected child, of which we see too many specimens in our day. The left or 'sent adrift' in this passage, comes to nearly the same thing as the being 'let alone' applied to Ephraim. 'Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone.' It evidently refers to the absence of those providential checks which both prevent the commission of much outward evil, and, even in the case of the unrenewed man, often curb the inner workings of sin.

"The above expressions are quite appropriate when applied to the cases mentioned; for what had to be expressed there was the negation of action, the absence of a restraining and counteracting influence. A thing that

existed before was to be allowed to work unchecked. In the fall from innocence to guilt, on the other hand, there is a change to be accounted for. There is a *new* effect, requiring the supposition of a new cause. Now, as this cause must exist before the effect, if we are to seek it in the being that falls, we must seek it in his nature before he fell, while he was yet innocent, as by the time he had become sinful it would be too late to account for his sin. This nature consisted first of what was positively good, therefore containing no germ of defection; and, secondly, of the peccability alluded to. The latter being a negation, could not, as already said, account for a change, which, indeed, had it been fitted to effect, it would have effected at the very beginning of the creature's existence, seeing it was always present. We must, therefore, find the cause out of the creature.

"We may arrive at this conclusion even more surely by another process of reasoning. If I have in another place succeeded in proving (what, indeed, had been proved before) that the creature can never hold his present existence from his past, but must hold it direct from God, it follows that he cannot properly at any moment owe his present nature either to his past, but to God. When a being is brought, as at every instant he is, by God out of his inherent nothingness into existence, he must have a certain *suchness* given to him along with existence; and thus every successive volition and mode of being characterising him when thus re-created, is the direct production of the Supreme.

"Yes, we come at length to the legitimate conclusion from all that has preceded—the great and glorious doctrine of Divine omniagency. We have seen that the will must be determined by something out of itself. It

is determined according to the laws of its nature; but who instituted those laws? Who at every instant carries them out? For laws have no inherent potency in them to insure their operation. What *are* the laws of the creation, in fact, but the rules observed by the Creator?—rules which accordingly He may, and we see does occasionally depart from (in the case of miracles). This is generally acknowledged as respects the physical world. Thus, with respect to gravitation, all educated theists believe that, as often as an unsupported body falls to the ground, it is because of the action of God. He has established the law, and He also carries it out in each particular instance.

“The case is and must be the same in the moral world. The law cannot execute itself. For example, all men are born with a desire for approbation. This is a law of human nature, which, as a second cause, is prolific in results. But what is this but a compendious mode of saying that God creates in every man, under certain circumstances, the desire in question? In each particular instance it is the action of the Creator on the creature, which, of course, makes the creature in its turn act. The will being moved moves. As the orientals compendiously express it, ‘The creation (of volitions) is from God, the exercise from the servant.’

“In expressing his opinion that a part of the theology of America was verging insensibly towards a species of pantheism, Dr Dwight appears to trace the fact wholly, or in part, to the view in question—Divine omniagency—while, at the same time, he speaks with much respect of the holders of it. He says of them, ‘In many instances, at least, they appear to give as unquestionable proofs of piety and virtue as are given by any other, and

to devote their labours as cheerfully and faithfully to the promotion of truth and righteousness in the world.'

"The term Pantheism has been applied to opinions varying much from one another. With that to which Dwight refers, which denies all personality to the Divinity and makes Him a mere abstraction, it is difficult to see what omniagency has in common. There is another pantheism, however, which at first sight it more resembles, that, namely, which acknowledges the perfect personality of the Deity, but denies the personality, and indeed the proper existence of the creature. This scheme, while including omniagency, evidently includes much more. It views God not only as acting in everything, but as the only actor. It not only represents the creature as certainly and at all times dependent on the Creator, but it confounds the creature with the Creator. Passing by other serious objections to this theory, it is quite in opposition to the language of Scripture, where the creature is spoken of as *as truly* existing and acting as God Himself, though, of course, in a very different manner. Though God *made* man a living soul, man *lives*. Though God causes man to act, man *acts*. The essential condition of *action*, in a moral and philosophical sense, is *will*; and this, so far as we can comprehend the thing at all, the creature possesses as truly as the Creator. The difference is, that his will is derived, that of the Creator underived. Before enlarging on the doctrine of omniagency, or *pantism*, as I prefer naming it, let me dwell for a time on the unsatisfactoriness of the distinction with which our timid current theology contents itself, namely, that between God's *permitting* and His *ordaining* evil. There is, in fact, no point in which that theology deviates so widely from the bold and un-

flinching language of Scripture as in this. That describes not the Eternal God as *permitting* evil; that speaks not of His *suffering* men's hearts to be hardened: it says, 'I the Lord create evil.' 'Whom He will He hardeneth.' This timid mode of speech was doubtless intended to shelter the character of God; but if the whole, not the half, truth is given, it will be seen to need no such shelter. If, therefore, I would drive this fearful jealousy from her unsafe retreat, it is that she may betake herself to one that cannot be so assailed.

"What is gained by supposing God only *permitted* sin? How *could* He permit it, if it were better it had not been? What has misled men here is judging the Supreme Jehovah by a rule applicable only to creature imperfection. We are often excused for permitting, *i.e.*, not attempting to prevent, much that we condemn, because the opposing will would either inevitably conquer in the struggle, or perhaps be roused into fiercer action by our opposition, and for these and similar reasons, it may be manifest that more good or less harm will ensue from forbearing than from pressing our point; but permission thus implies a resisting will to which we yield. Most inapplicable, therefore, is it to the All-disposer, whose part it ever is not to yield and conform, but to originate, plan, and rule, and who assuredly can never bestow on the creature the power of actually resisting Him. There may be a *feeling* of resistance on the part of the creature, an opposition to the *complacent* will of God. Of this nature is that resistance of the Holy Ghost which we read of, Acts vii. 51. It being the office of the Spirit to execute the complacent will of God alone, He produces only good volitions. There is a sense also in which God only permits things, namely,

when He allows what He condemns and hates, to run its course unchecked, and interferes not in the meantime to punish or prevent it, till the end is accomplished which He *intended* this evil to subserve. In this sense He is said to have 'suffered the Israelites' manners in the wilderness.' *Resistance* and *permission* thus understood clearly do not interfere with the uniform conformity of the actual to God's determining will, consequent on His universal action. In any other sense we shall find great intellectual difficulties in the way of the theory of permission, while the moral ones remain quite unlesened. These, indeed, are just the same whether we suppose God to originate, to ordain, or to permit evil; as, considering the absoluteness of His power as respects the creature which all acknowledge, the existence of that evil must in one way or another, directly or more circuitously, be traced to His will. The only possible escape from this dilemma is in the supposition, of which the absurdity, to use no harsher word, is palpable, that God was positively unable to prevent the entrance, or check the subsequent developments of sin, and therefore is obliged to submit to it. Evil, in fact, brought itself into existence, and continually reproduces itself, and God not being able to do it away, suffers it to remain. Or to describe the case somewhat differently, that God instituted laws which would necessarily produce much evil along with the good, and as necessarily the evil as the good, but while He *ordained* the one He only *suffered* the other. Truly this is a subtle distinction!

"I think there is more satisfaction in the following hypothesis. The present creation as yet existed not; evil, as respects it, was only a possibility; God, by His laws, made it a certainty. He intended to bring good

out of it; He knew that the greatest amount of good could not be accomplished without it, therefore He as certainly decreed it as He has done any one of the means, in themselves good or indifferent, which with equal but no *greater* certainty and perfection are working out His glorious designs. Evil being invariably instrumental to good (which if it were not He would no more have permitted than ordained it), He would not have been the all-wise and beneficent Being that He is, if He had not so ordered things as that it certainly should come to pass.

“ This appears on the whole to be the view taken by Edwards, who, though he sometimes speaks of God’s permitting sin, evidently does so in the sense of His not wishing it for its own sake, and not as opposed to His ordaining it. Thus he says, ‘ These events (in the moral world) will be ordered by something. They will either be disposed by wisdom, or they will be disposed by chance—that is, they will be disposed by blind and undesigning causes, if that were possible, and could be called a disposal. Is it not better that the good and evil which happen in God’s world, should be ordered, regulated, bounded, and determined by the good pleasure of an infinitely wise Being—who perfectly comprehends within His understanding and constant view the universality of things, in all their extent and duration, and sees all the influence of every event, with respect to every individual thing and circumstance throughout the grand system, and the whole of the eternal series of consequences—than to leave these things to fall out by chance, and to be determined by those causes which have no understanding or aim?’ Thus, while he did not go the whole length of omniagency, he approached

very near it. Similar, also, appears to have been the opinion of Calvin.

"In like manner the Westminster Confession describes God as ordaining whatsoever comes to pass. Now, as I said before, in a moral point of view, this makes the conduct of God, as respects the existence of sin, exactly the same as though He directly produced it. That which we do by means of an instrument, is as truly our act as what we do with our own hand. The reason why I would speak of God not as simply ordaining evil, but as producing it, is that, in my view, nothing in existence, either a law or an individual, has any independent energy or life in it—all hangs immediately and absolutely on its Creator—the sole original power in the universe. To repeat a former expression—Laws are the rules according to which *the Creator acts*. They have no potency in themselves. Reason clearly teaches pantism, and Scripture is not less explicit. The doctrine literally *abounds* in it, especially in the narrative parts. I will give a few examples:—1 Sam. ii. 25. 2 Sam. xvi. 10, 11; xvii. 14. 1 Kings xii. 15, 24. 2 Kings xxvi. 2, 3, 20. Isa. x. 5, 6, 15. Jer. li. 7, 20–23; lii. 3. Ps. xxxiii. 14, 15; cxli. 1, 4; cv. 25. Acts ii. 23. Rev. xvii. 17.

"What could more clearly bring out this idea than the figure of the potter and the clay, used by St Paul? What *absolute* dependence is expressed in the words, 'Shall the thing formed say to him that *formed* it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power (or right) over the clay, of the same lump to *make* one vessel unto honour, and *another unto dishonour*?' Here God is not spoken of as *making* all creatures: about that there could be no dispute as to His power or

right. What is declared is, His right to make certain of them *unto dishonour*—that is, making them such vessels as that dishonour was, in the meantime, their only appropriate destination.

“To set against this very decided pantist Scripture testimony, I know of none which even, *primâ facie*, bears an opposite character, save that passage in St James, where it is said, ‘Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God,’ &c. Now I allow that this, at first sight, seems to make much against pantism; but there is an hypothesis which, to a reader well versed in the manner of Scripture and oriental expression generally, is by no means far-fetched, that will remove the difficulty. It is that which views *God* here as signifying the Holy Ghost, who is the executor of the complacent will of God—of that which, in a certain sense, is His sole will—as being the only one which comes direct from His heart. The Holy Ghost is the Father of lights, from whom comes every good and perfect gift; whereas of God, taken absolutely and supremely, it is said, or rather He saith of Himself, ‘I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil. I, the Lord, do all these things.’

“I now turn to the consideration of the fatal moral objections which have been brought against the doctrine I have undertaken to advocate—that it would annul the distinction between good and evil, absolve the sinner from guilt in his own evil actions, and, finally, fasten that guilt on the Creator. It is part of the system I have wished all along to uphold, that moral distinctions are to be viewed as independent of, and in a sense superior to, the character and will even of the High God

himself—forming a supreme standard of the *ought*, by which all of the *is*, whether that be of the transient or the permanent, of the derived or the underived, must be tried. It is because it conforms to, and did not form this eternal rule, that the Divine will can be described as holy, wise, and good; and, so far as any other will in the universe conforms to it, is it also holy, good, and wise. We can conceive of the Supreme Will not having conformed to it, and being an evil one, and still we may suppose, and in fact feel the philosophical necessity of supposing, all derived wills being under the control of the underived one. But, in that case, the Pantist would, as clearly and as boldly as the Libertarian, declare that the highest moral rules would be violated by the creature will (were it enlightened by a correct sense—in such a case a very unlikely supposition), which should conform to that Will, though Supreme, and not to the independent and paramount standard of abstract right.

“In itself, therefore, the doctrine of omniagency, as it does not represent the Divine will as constituting, neither does it describe it as impairing, the eternal and immutable distinction between good and evil. It leaves that Will like every other to be brought to the one infallible test.

“In order to obtain just views on this question, and clear the Divine Being from participation in His choice of evil, it is necessary to attend to the easy and obvious, but certainly very important, distinction between His immediate and, as we may term it, His temporary, and His real and final will. It is in this way we shall perceive the essential difference between His willing of evil and His willing of good. He rests not in the former, delights not in it, wills it not for its own sake; there-

fore, in one sense, He may be said not to will it. 'He wills not the death of the sinner,' though he has decreed it. 'He afflicts us not willingly,' though from His loving hand come all our sorrows. And the moral difficulty is precisely the same with sorrow as with sin. To cause the slightest unhappiness as an end, would be as unworthy of His perfect love, as to cause sin would be of His spotless purity. To quote from Samuel Hopkins of New England, the great apostle of omniagency in the west: 'If the Divine conduct can be vindicated in causing natural evil to take place, on the same ground it can be vindicated in causing moral evil to exist; and not one objection can be made against the latter, which may not equally, and with as good reason, be made against the former. For instance, if it should be objected against the latter, that to make God the origin and cause of sin, is to suppose moral evil is in Him, for there can be nothing in the effect which is not in the cause: this may, with equal truth and reason, be said of natural evil. If God be the origin and cause of it, this supposes natural evil to be in Him, and that He is infinitely unhappy and miserable; for there is, &c. . . . Again, if it be objected that, if it be agreeable to the will of God that sin should exist, and He chose it should take place, and is, therefore, the origin and cause of its existence, then sin is agreeable to His will, and He is pleased with it: it may, with as much propriety and as good reason, be said, if God wills the existence of natural evil, and causes it to take place, then He is pleased with it, and delights in the misery of His creatures, consequently He cannot be a good, but a morally evil Being.' He then goes on to say, that if the end in view 'solves the difficulty in one case, it must do so in the other.' In fact,

he shews that the two things cannot be separated. When commenting on the expression, 'I create evil,' (and the same remarks apply to the verse, 'Is there evil in the city, and I the Lord have not done it?') he shews that, even supposing natural evil only be directly intended here, yet this will necessarily involve moral evil; for a great part of the former which takes place among men is the natural and necessary result of the latter. It is effected by the exercise of men's selfishness and lusts. 'From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?'

"God's willing evil, therefore, both natural and moral, and originating it, by no means proving His approving of it in itself, and the eternal distinction between right and wrong remaining entirely unaffected by this view, it is clear it does not and cannot do away with the creature's guilt in his own evil actions. Evil is still evil, though God make it instrumental to good. Therefore, the guilt of the willing perpetrator of sin is not in the least diminished. The standard of right is unchanging, and the obligation of moral agents to conform to it never relaxed. Though everything is exactly conformed to what has been distinguished as God's *immediate* will, as that is regulated by principles too deep and subtle for us to discover before its development, it can never serve as a rule for our actions, nor was it ever intended to be such. For this we are referred to God's express commands and revealed will. It is, therefore, a perfectly vain excuse for the commission of sin, that it is but the fulfilment of God's present will. Indeed, though there may be found men who will ostensibly rest on such an argument, (for to what subterfuge will not guilt, seconded

by sophistry, resort?) this can scarcely be the real *motive* of any man's evil actions, nor is it the plea which he urges. When men seek a sanction for their wickedness in the will of God, it is by asserting it to be not only ordained by Him, but in itself agreeable to Him. They pretend that their evil is not evil, because their object in doing it is that good may come. This is frequently seen in the case of persecutors and bigots. There is no doubt, indeed, that there is also at times a real self-deception which justifies wrong acts to the conscience by an ulterior good object to be answered. Such, probably, was the feeling of Paul, when he thought he ought to persecute the Christians; and also, perhaps, of those of whom our Lord foretold His disciples, who, in killing them, would think they were doing God service.

"In order to judge of the amount of *guilt* involved in such actions, we should require to know how far they were *formally*, and how far only *materially*, evil. Passing by mere errors of judgment, as appertaining to the intellect and not to morals, we must pronounce all desires and feelings which swerve from the eternal law of right to be essentially, materially evil. Yet can these only be described as *formally* evil when violating the law of conscience in the individual. This inward test, though, when duly regulated and properly developed, exactly corresponding with the outward standard, is so much exposed to counteracting and perverting influences, as not only, in the case of all, often to *withhold* its testimony when needed, but in that of some to give frequently a wrong verdict. Hence it happens that many acts and emotions which belong to the mass of material evil (for instance, feelings of revenge, not only indulged in, but approved of, amongst savage tribes) must be ex-

cluded from that of formal wrong. Now, while disapproval ever, and at times disgust, should extend to the former, *guilt* and *blame* can, it seems, only attach to the latter.

“ Though it seemed to me well to attend to this distinction, it does not properly bear upon the question at issue, for whether we attach blame to all material evil, or restrict it to what is formally wrong, it is certain that every human being daily incurs a large amount of guilt, if not on account of sins of commission, on account of those of *omission*. Guilt, we see, arises from neglecting or doing violence to *conscience*. Conscience bears witness to the sempiternal law of rectitude. The *immediate* determining will of God has nothing whatever to do with it, therefore the fact that God *thus* wills and causes moral evil as well as natural, leaves man’s guilt in the matter exactly the same.

“ The connexion between guilt and punishment is according to the strict laws of justice, *i. e.*, propriety. And thus, while primary, or, as we may call it, *anterior* justice, may and does require that moral evil should be at last put an end to in each creature’s case by the All-Disposer, *posterior* justice allows, and, save in exceptional cases, requires that this moral evil should in the meantime be met by physical, and the sinful instrument, in the accomplishment of his Maker’s immediate purposes, be brought by the pure Actor through punishment into conformity with His real and final will.

“ This is so deeply important and, in a moral view, difficult a question, that I must, even at the risk of going again in part over the same ground, dwell on another form in which the objection may be put. ‘ Though the moral agent is certainly wrong,’ it may be said, ‘ that

conforms not in everything to his sense of the abstract right, how can the Great Actor in consistency blame him for it when He has really done the act himself?' But has the Great Actor done *this* act? What really gives character to the act is the motive which inspired it. It is thus we every day assign to two outwardly perfectly similar acts a totally different character, as the motives which led to them appeared to us to have differed. We see an instance of this in Joseph's brethren. The selling Joseph into Egypt was certainly their act, and yet, so completely was their evil intention in it overruled, that Joseph described it not as their doing but as God's: 'It was not you that sent me hither, but God, who meant it unto good.' In using the customary term *overrule*, I do not mean to concede that the Supreme, like men, finds things in a certain situation and acts accordingly. No, it is He himself that creates the situation, and intended from the first so to do. In the selling of Joseph, just as in Joseph's eventual advantage therefrom, He created all the volitions of the various agents which brought about the result.

"From these considerations we may see that God's production of sin in the creature is not an identical act with that of the creature in whom it is produced. That sin consists in the evil of its own nature whereby-soever caused. The production of sin, however, though not at all identical with, nor lessening nor absorbing the guilt attached to the sin produced, is often itself a crime of still deeper dye. It must ever be such if the sin be the *end* proposed, but if it be a means to a further end, as it is with God who produces physical and moral evil, with the intent and certainty thereby largely to promote physical and moral good, the case is certainly different.

Still it might come under that class of cases in which improper means were used for a good purpose. To determine this question we must pause a little on the phrase, 'doing evil that good may come;' because it is one much urged against this view of the omniagency of God.

"The expression, as commonly used, denotes the committing moral evil in order to physical good, as when a man tells a falsehood to obtain your money. Here, to say nothing of the means employed, the end itself is low and selfish. But there are also cases in which, though the end itself is in the widest sense *good*, the means used to bring it about may be unjustifiable. The good end proposed does not always impart by reflection a good moral character to the means employed. To take an example. We must not, as the saying is, rob Peter to pay Paul; even although we know Peter is very well able to spare what we might take from him, and we may fully intend on some future occasion to repay him with interest. Neither would it make any difference though it was we who before had given Peter that which we now steal from him. We are creatures of time and uncertainty, and such far-seeing experiments would never do for us. Accordingly, there are certain definite rights of property which we must observe. With God the case is different. He has a right to do what He pleases with all that we possess, and this a right not of might alone, but of perfect wisdom and love, and therefore we see that He does continually rob Peter in the first instance to pay Paul. While He never sacrifices the good of one being *eventually* to that of another, He often *in the meantime* causes some to suffer for others. Not to see this would be to be blind to His providential

hand in a great portion of the history of every individual and every nation.

"This whole subject is one which it would be curiously and deeply interesting to follow up, but to do so in this place would lead me too far. I can but simply state here the conclusion to which my investigation of this point has conducted me, that the reason why *we* are more restricted in the use of means than God, is that our individual acts have more *finality* in them, so to speak, than have His. He knows, with perfect accuracy and perfect certainty, *all* the effects which will result from every act, and is able to trust confidently to His own power of correcting and complementing it by other acts. Therefore we must not judge of God's right over us by ours over each other. It would be a fearful responsibility, which happily we do not possess, that of creating evil in one another for the promotion of good. Satan does so as an instrument, but only as an instrument, and his sin is that he does it not for good. What should we think of a man who intentionally made any of his fellow-men blind or lame? We should shrink from him with horror. Yet God makes many of His creatures blind and lame. This is no sin in Him, because His purpose in it is good, and He is *secure* of bringing about a good result from it. It is exactly the same with moral evil.

"To sum up the whole matter, this creation of temporary evil is not contrary to love; for it is a means of increased happiness. It is not contrary to justice; for in the distribution of evil as well as good, we may be quite certain the rights of the *individual* are sacredly guarded. It is not contrary to holiness; for the unlovely is only produced as tending to and ending in the lovely.

"I have blended with my remarks on Pantism its beautiful sister doctrine Omnism. When severed from it, it appears terrible and painful to such a degree it is difficult to conceive of any loving heart resting satisfied with it; and yet it has been held by many very holy men, in whom, doubtless, God's own love abounded. For instance (to say nothing of Dr Hopkins himself) by Dr Spring of Newbury Port, New England, whose prayers were considered by his friends as mainly instrumental in causing a remarkable revival which took place in his neighbourhood about 1811. And even unrelieved by Universalism it is still far more philosophical and consistent, and therefore in one sense satisfactory to a seeker for truth, than views which make the creature in any sense independent of the Creator. Nor has its practical tendency, I believe, been found to be in the least inimical to holiness, zeal, or righteous indignation, nor at all to blunt the edge of ethical sensibility.

"The minds of most men, however, will be shut against the doctrine of Pantism, until it comes hand in hand with Omnism. Thus united they lend mutual support. If Omnism recommends Pantism in relation to the feelings, Pantism confirms Omnism in relation to the reason. That God should produce temporary moral as well as physical evil, in order to a permanent increase of both physical and moral good in the individual as well as the mass, is consistent with all His attributes. But that He should rest in that evil in either case, but especially in the former, as the final issue, is a supposition entirely at variance with His perfections.

"The various evangelical eternist schemes, more or less philosophical though they be, must, one and all, seem to the Universalist broken snatches, and discordant

withal, of a lovely song. But there is music still. When I consider these schemes in the abstract, I feel an impatient, sometimes an indignant dissatisfaction ; but at other times this feeling almost melts away under the recollection of the many generous and gentle souls who have fed upon the truth thus mixed, extracting the sweet from the bitter, seeking to check their struggling regrets and in a measure succeeding, not only by means of that reverential awe which well becomes us in the presence of an august Creator, but by that confidence in His perfect love, which, inspired by Himself, outweighs all seeming testimony against it. Assuredly, I should not find it in my heart to unveil to such the real character of their own schemes, had I not one so satisfying and so glorious to present to them in their stead."

CHAPTER XIX.

DR HAMILTON'S ARGUMENTS.

FREDERIC and Elizabeth's much venerated "Unknown" was, to my happiness, not unknown to me their chronicler; and therefore I shall, with the writer's permission, subjoin to the following "Notes" on Dr Hamilton's works on "Future Rewards and Punishments," written by Frederic for his friend Mr Merton (who having the work by him could dispense with quotations), some remarks by that other hand,* which I have entitled "Supplementary Notes," and a paper on the case of Judas.

These will form a separate chapter, and the succeeding one will consist of a long paper on certain Scripture texts by the same writer.

NOTES AND REMARKS ON LECTURES VI. VII. AND VIII.
OF THE REV. DR HAMILTON'S WORK, ENTITLED,
"THE REVEALED DOCTRINE OF REWARDS AND
PUNISHMENTS."

P. 296. "God's moral government designs only good. Punishment equally with reward a provision to secure it." Agreed. [Therefore vindictive feeling foreign to it.]

* See Preface.

P. 297. "Moral government right and reasonable." Agreed. "Must enforce sanctions," i.e., "punish transgressions." Agreed.

P. 299. The representative test, like many of the other parts of the vast and perfect scheme of God's dealings with His creatures, too deep and subtle in its wisdom for us fully to appreciate, yet does not, if rightly understood, in the least violate our sense of the justice or goodness of God; these remain quite unaffected by it. There is one fundamental maxim which we find God invariably adheres to in His moral government. He views each one of His creatures as standing in a direct relation to Himself, and in His treatment of men applies to them individually the direct rules of equity and love. Thus if it was a part of Adam's punishment that his seed should suffer with him in his transgression, it is also true that each one of that race has been punished not because Adam sinned, but because he himself has done so. That view of the sentence of original sin which would describe God as punishing Adam's children *on account of* their father's transgression, finds no more support in Scripture than in conscience or reason. Let it be assumed as proved that with God nothing is contingent because nothing unknown; that this knowledge can only proceed from pre-determination. All that ever happens is according to His eternal decree. The fall, therefore, was pre-determined, and its consequences too. Each of these consequences, every development of the fallen nature with which all of Adam's descendants come into this world, is the immediate result of the will of God. It is to these separate decrees we must apply the rule of goodness and equity, and not to that, to man, contingent covenant, which

apparently made the lot of many dependent on the will of one. Must we then deny Adam's federal character? By no means. Whether Adam knew it or not, he assuredly stood for all his race in his trial. There was a constituted union between him and them, which bound up their lot in his. Scripture is explicit on this point. Their future fate was thus dependent on his conduct, in the sense in which events generally are mutually dependent, as for instance the continuance of life on respiration. There is a certain law by which they are connected. This law amounts, however, to nothing more than a rule according to which God determined to act. It is a compendious mode of giving unity of character and known certainty to a series of acts towards the race.

There appears to me a fallacy in the assertion that every act of moral government must be complete in itself, and that on this account, to make "the justice of the representative test applied to our manhood depend upon the certainty that remedial measures were in store" is a "vicious theology." Justice is so much a thing of relations, I know not that any single act of it can be said to be entire in itself. Its true character must be determined by something in the being acted on or by other acts of the agent. Thus, I see a man led to prison and immured there much against his will; I cannot tell whether this be cruelty or justice that is exercised towards him till I learn further particulars. Again, I see a man strip a boy of an old tattered coat which helped to preserve him from the cold. My first impression, perhaps, is that there is injustice, but I soon correct it when I see a second coat produced, warmer and better than the first. And the more consistent and long-sighted a being is, the more necessary is it we should

view his actions in connexion and not as insulated. The federal arrangement was not so much an act of moral government as, as I said before, a formal law, which was neither just nor unjust in itself, but whose *fitness* was doubtless in great part owing to the complementary law of the representativeness of Christ. If, however, we break down this idea of *law*, and view God in His dealings with each individual sinner, while certainly *posterior* justice, in no case overstepping its bounds, required not to borrow vindication from any subsequent arrangement, it may not be the same as respects *anterior* justice, that which is owing to being as such, and which will not suffer the evil, moral and physical taken together, of any being's lot to overbalance the good. Whether or not, however, the great Mediatorial work was on this score in any measure a tribute to equity, it is clear that in the immediate title to eternal happiness, and all the spiritual blessings enjoyed in time which it procures for Christ's own people, and the final restoration of the rest of mankind, the claims of justice are immeasurably exceeded.

P. 300. "Practically, every man is now placed under the original law. What was their duty cannot be less their duty now." Agreed. It is a law which cannot be rescinded. Every being possessed of an internal law of right and wrong, corresponding with that external one, is responsible for each departure from it, and blameworthy. If blame begin not at the first deviation, it can never be introduced. The least transgression of the law is sin, as truly, though not of course as *much*, deserving of punishment as a great crime.

It is much to be lamented that we act so little practically on this rule. We are so full of sin ourselves, and

so completely surrounded by beings who are so, that we are apt to judge of things by an average morality, a standard formed by experience and expectation, rather than that never-reached, yet never-lowered, standard of moral perfection, which is as binding on the creature as on the Creator—there can be but one moral standard for both—and if we seek to excuse our imperfect holiness and love by the fact that our nature is fallen, for exactly the same reason must we excuse the hatred and malignity of the devils. Our nature means what we are; our being what we are is assuredly no kind of excuse for our being so. The fact that this nature was given us by God affects its origin, but not its character.

Yet this standard of reasonable expectation is in a sense perhaps practically the right one. It teaches forbearance, leniency, and candour. It has the sanction of God himself, who, though of purer eyes than to behold (countenance) iniquity, is of tender pity, and remembers we are dust. But it is misapplied if it cause self-satisfaction, deadness of aspiration, or the regarding feelings of deep self-abasement as romantic and troubled dreams, and not awakenings to a too certain and, in this life, too constant reality.

P. 300-303. "Practically disease." Agreed. Natural religion teaches punishment for sin, but informs not as to its degree or duration. For this we are referred to revelation.

P. 306. "No tendency in evil to exhaust itself." Agreed. Therefore, if the soul continue in being, no *need* in the nature of things for sin, or consequently for punishment, to cease, taking posterior justice only into account. Whether they *can* do so is another question, and a most extraordinary one to be raised. When the

blasphemer and the murderer are converted in this life, do they become therefore "*unspiritual*," *irresponsible*? Where is the impossibility, then, that He who gives them a new will should, at some future period, change that of all the impenitent? Thus all these remarks on *habit, character, consequence*, are irrelevant. There is no tide He cannot stem, no torrent He cannot divert.

P. 312. We wish Him not to "prevent the sense of shame in wrong-doing—the creature's remorse."

P. 313. We wish Him not to bar the enforcement of His own law. But we deny that He who sees the end from the beginning can have framed a law which would result in irremediable evil. It is true that, to a great extent, "moral consequences lie beyond the control of the Deity." But not to follow out and meet the implied inference here, that any class of guilty beings must ever continue to be so, was it beyond the control of the Deity or not that these guilty mortals should exist at all?

P. 314. After death "no space to repent." Agreed. No repentance can then avert the threatened punishment.

P. 315. "But *need* He?" No one, I believe, has ever asserted that we owe eternal happiness to God's *justice*; but *love* is a blessed *necessity* with Him.

P. 316. "Will He? Then," &c. False assertion that if God may save *after* punishment, He might do so without it. "Can He? This is not a business of omnipotence. Indeed, this attribute never stands alone. It is never set forth as simple power." Has it ever been thus used in the argument? Those who have laid much stress on the *power* of God to save all, have either first attempted to prove, or have assumed that it was "just, and wise, and good" to do so; have judged, therefore, that this end must be desired by God, and finally rest

upon the certainty that He is able to do all that He desires. If there is any fallacy in the argument thus stated, there is no *flippancy*. Is there anything more "flippant" in the presumption that God can make all His creatures eventually happy, than in this, that He can make some of them eternally miserable? If Dr Hamilton denies our capability of judging whether any supposed scheme is wise, and just, and good, how can he challenge our admiration for the one he himself believes in? If he objects to the particular scheme which we propose, and seeks to prove by analysis that it is inconsistent with those attributes of God, he must allow the same advantage to those who believe that it is not; but if he contents himself with the inference drawn from the dogmatic assertion, that God has declared He will pursue an opposite conduct, he should feel that this argument has no weight with those who doubt the alleged fact, and even believe the exact contrary.

On the supposition of a limited punishment, the following remarks of Dr Hamilton's on sovereignty and justice might not be objected to, as then neither would be represented as inconsistent with that universal love which, as it is, seems left out of the case. Love desires the final happiness of all beings, which, power being able to effect it, is secure. But sovereignty resolves on the additional and more immediate blessing to some, of the remission of even their deserved chastisement. The reasons which dictated this choice are, indeed, unknown to us, as are also the reasons why the others are passed by. To save all in this life would "contradict these reasons," but not so to restore them eventually.

P. 317. It does not appear so correct to say there are "different aspects of the one will of God," as to say

that this one word, "will," is used to describe different things. 1. Wish, moral, or complacent will, answering to what in itself is agreeable to God. 2. Command—legislative and authoritative will. 3. Volition—determining and inworking will; for these I regard as identical. Which of these meanings to assign to any particular case will be determined by the theological views of him who interprets.

P. 319. "Where their worm," &c. No repetition in the best Greek MSS.

P. 320. We might surely in our turn have referred Dr Hamilton to the law and to the testimony, when in such high-wrought amplification he dwells on the horrible iniquity of the sufferers in hell! What sanction is there for this in Holy Writ? The main question, however, would be entirely unaffected though this were granted.

P. 324. "Nor can guilty presumption," &c. Agreed. The fire being figurative takes not from its terror, but adds to it. Mental agony is less endurable than physical.

P. 324. "Are these sufferings," &c. Agreed. Future torments, though not vindictive, not corrective either, but the appropriate doom of transgressors.

P. 338. The Atonement taking effect in the salvation of the elect, if it removes an outward obstacle, removes an inward one too. The *willingness* of His people is one of the things secured to Christ by His sacrifice. Why may not the same change take effect eventually in the rest? There is no necessity for any "violent meetening of the reluctant for heaven."

P. 339. Infants' entrance on immortal bliss without previous faith or love, is a doctrine resting much more entirely on *speculation* than Universalism. One error engenders another. This the fruit—tempting, but hollow

—of eternism, or rather of that system which would make death to all the entrance on a final state.

P. 342. The emotions of rage and revenge are generally acknowledged to be inconsistent with the Divine perfections. But so contrary, so abhorrent to His nature is sin, so resolved is He to punish it, that the strongest terms which Scripture employs can but imperfectly convey to our minds how utterly He is set against it. Yet they are often only images used in condescension to our weakness of capacity. God's revenge, like His relentings, is an aspect of truth from a human point of view, *di sotto in su*. Without by any means fully concurring with Dr Hamilton's sentiments on this subject, I yet must acknowledge that his remarks tell very forcibly against those who look on future punishment as corrective.

P. 347. Whether the arguments here adduced for the postponement of a part, at least, of the punishment of sin to another scene be perfectly or certainly correct, we have no thought of questioning the justice and wisdom of that arrangement. We can well conceive that the *witnessing* of such an awful doom, even by those who were in mercy spared its endurance, would interfere with the discharge of their duties on earth, as well as too fearfully mar its innocent enjoyments.

P. 350. "May not moral nature so corrupt its way as to become hateful?" There is a confounding here of the love of benevolence with that of complacency; the former, being independent of character, must, in an unchangeable being, have a continuous and unceasing flow; the latter, of course, varies with the object.

P. 351. A "goodness, partial and fond," and "weakly indulgent," is imperfect love; we ascribe not that to

God ; but we ascribe to Him *love*, a universal, unchanging, all-wise, all-CONQUERING love. The Father may and ought often to act as the judge ; He may in a measure feel as one ; offended justice may assert its full rights within ; but does he gain morally by ceasing to feel as the Father too ? And if He do thus feel, will He not, to use the words of the woman of Tekoa, “ seek to bring home His banished ? ”

P. 352. Very similar remarks seem applicable here to those under p. 469 of Dr Hamilton. We may err much in judging as to the immediate course God will follow ; but conscience will guide us pretty clearly as to the ultimate ends He will have in view. His moral character is simple, His wisdom intricate.

P. 353. It can only be matter of conjecture whether our race's future punishment will serve the purpose of example to other beings ; but we cannot say it will not do so. It is a foolish objection that which Dr Hamilton condemns, that this would suppose “ excess ” of purpose, and, therefore, injury. The suffering will, of course, be exactly proportioned to the sin of the individual. It *is* the fruit of his sin ; but God may in this, as in everything else, accomplish many ends by means of one thing. No benefit to these beings can warrant the violation or overstepping of exact justice to the individual immediately concerned ; but that being satisfied, the identical act may in perfect propriety subserve other purposes.

P. 361. The idea of an eternity of suffering was certainly found amongst the Pagans of all ages ; and, in the apostolic times, it was also held by the sect of the Pharisees. Instead, however, of finding in these facts anything at all confirmatory of the *truth* of the doctrine, we rather would regard them as suggestive of its origin as

an *error*. We know that early Christianity suffered much from Judaizing teachers, and was also much tainted with the leaven of heathen philosophy, as Milner repeatedly points out. Speaking of the second century, he says, "St Paul's caution against philosophy and vain deceit, it appears, was now fatally neglected by the Christians," and shews how some of the most excellent men suffered from their imbuelement with heathen lore; while of others, "it was difficult to say whether they were Pagans or Christians." It is likely, however, that the real belief of some of the most eminent heathen philosophers was not eternal misery. It seems ascertained that Cicero privately disbelieved in a future state altogether. Proclus evidently believed in the final happiness and purity of all; and, if he was a correct interpreter, such also was Plato's real belief. Among the pure and serene-minded Soofees of Asia, this is an undisputed doctrine; and because the vulgar have in all countries adopted a grosser view, it does not follow that that view is in accordance with natural religion. Natural religion is not to be confounded with human perversions.

P. 365. "To hold a doctrine," &c. The concluding charges are scarcely consistent with the earlier ones. If these secret Universalists *have* felt "the truth not to be certainly established," or *have* imagined "its influence not to be beneficial," how could there be malignity or cruelty on their part in keeping it back?

P. 367. Is there no "forced construction," no "adroit evasion" needed to make destruction mean preservation?

P. 368. "The most devout, obedient, and zealous Christians have acknowledged" eternal misery, because they believed it to be taught in Scripture; and many who have denied it, have done so without, perhaps,

giving sufficient weight to its apparent presence there; hence, when the Word of God assumed its due authority over their minds, they stifled doubts which appeared inconsistent with that submission.

Pp. 368, 369. Dr Hamilton here proves that the Hebrew word, *gnolam*, may signify everlasting; but of this no one, I think, has ever doubted. All that is required for the Universalist argument is the equally undoubted fact, that it is used also to denote a period of limited duration. Any one who can consult a Hebrew lexicon, will find that the original and proper meaning of this word is *tempus occultum*—"a hidden period, whose beginning or end is either uncertain or not defined"—hence eternity, perpetuity. There are numerous instances of both meanings in the Old Testament. Dr Hamilton mentions two other words, *nesah* and *thamidh*, both expressing continuance, but of which he says, "neither is so strong as *gnolam*"—that is, of course, they need not mean strict eternity. Of *gnadh*, he says that it is, in some points of view, still stronger than *gnolam*, yet he only says of it, it "bears to be rendered eternity." That it does not necessarily bear that meaning, is evident from its being the word employed in that clause of Habbakuk, "the perpetual hills did bow" (Hab. iii. 6). I cannot see that the concluding words in Isa. lxiv. 24, have an implied reference to eternal punishment. Surely they were simply descriptive of those fires which, though kindled on earth, were in themselves unearthly, yet were not eternal. Exaggeration in this case would, indeed, have been gross untruth.

P. 377. *Torment* only shews there is pain before destruction. Passing on to the Greek terms, I will not dwell on the three first brought forward by Dr Hamilton, *παντοτε*,

διηκενης, συνεχης, as confessedly *continuity, constancy, or uninterruptedness*, is their ground idea, and not unendingness. *Αιει*, he says, is "often accepted in the highest sense." Then passing on to the "two of greatest value in this inquiry," *αιδιος* and *αιων*, "both," he says, "may be put to the fullest sense or to a sense quite inferior." Of "*αιων*," he observes, that among Pagan writers "life is its common meaning," and it is sometimes "conjoined with an epithet which declares its brevity." He says it is never used in the classical sense of human life in the Christian records, but sometimes means the world or period of its lasting, its ages and dispensations. If that portion of eternity we call time is thus divided from the past eternity and termed an *αιων*, why may not another portion *after* this life be also thus separated?

P. 382. The argument built upon the application of *αιωνιος* to the life of the righteous. θ *

P. 384. Assuredly, with all these varieties and ambiguities of meaning, we will not "freely concede" that "the question, if one of literal lexicographical criticism, is placed beyond dispute," and that "the exegetical proof would be perfect, unless there be other reasons which necessitate a different construction." We shall make no such rash and uncalled-for concession! From this paragraph the inference might be drawn that we wish to set general reasonings against the dictates of "dogmatic revelation." But this is by no means the case. Whatever some Universalists may feel, with others the belief of the plenary, verbal inspiration of Scripture is too precious, too necessary for their repose,

* / This mark signifies an omission because the question is treated elsewhere.

and too deeply inwrought in their convictions, for them ever to dream of setting it aside. All they would say is that, as human language was used, to which a certain degree of ambiguity often attaches, and confessedly does so in the case of all those words here considered, if taken unconnected with the context or the nature of the case, it is absolutely necessary to take these considerations into view in order to determine the exact meaning. There is no scholar could deny this, nor himself reason on the subject without using this liberty. In his desire to fix down the weighty word *αιωνιος* to the sense of eternal, Dr H. does not, as indeed it was impossible he should, plead any philological necessity for so doing. On the contrary, he seeks to account for what he says "may be called its arbitrary use in Christianity," by the assertion that "its *potestas* was not equal to the doctrines of so sublime a religion;" and adds, "Its signs were to be expanded, and many of them newly fixed, when it received such a religion into its nomenclature." To what a strange mode of reasoning are Eternists reduced! We are first to derive the doctrine of eternal misery from *αιωνιος*, and then we are to go back and fix the meaning of *αιωνιος* from our previous idea of eternal misery!

P. 387. Argument on "For I will not contend for ever"—"He will not always chide," &c.—given up.

P. 388. Also, Restitution of all things.

Pp. 389-400. Some of the texts here quoted as being adduced by Universalists, and sought to be met, I have considered elsewhere; others I relinquish, as considering them, when rightly rendered and interpreted, not properly to bear on the subject.

P. 401. "It will be perhaps expected," &c. Win-

chester is rather confused on this point, and there is perhaps in his works some blending of the millennial glory of the Church on earth with the final consummation of all things, but he is not peculiar in finding it difficult to separate them. The true view is to consider the one as the type of the other in its universality as in its glory.

"An absolutely universal and certain salvation." Again the uncalled for supposition of force.

P. 406. Dr H., though rightly objecting to the assertion of the infinitude of the sin of a finite being, maintains its endlessness.^θ

P. 409. Though justice is satisfied in the remission of the punishment of the elect by Christ's vicarious sacrifice, do they for that claim eternal life as their due, or the less adore the unmerited love which has prepared for them an eternity of bliss? Why, then, should those released from hell receive that bliss coldly and proudly as their desert?

Those millions of infants who die without committing sin, and whom Dr Hamilton would admit into heaven without passing through any further stage of probation, do they sing of pardon or remission?

Pp. 410, 411. According to this, the unfallen angels must, indeed, be unable to *sympathise* with the ransomed?

Natural religion again confounded with Pagan superstitions.

P. 415. "Are the administrations of truth and mercy to be transferred to another state?" This, with the succeeding train of objections, is an instance of the rejection of the *ergo* on account of the difficulties of the *quomodo*.

P. 416. "There the motives of Christianity cannot fail! There it cannot return void!" Is this the language of a Calvinist?

P. 419. "For if we sin wilfully," &c. (Heb. x. 25). This passage is perfectly reconcilable with the Universalism here advocated, which declares no sacrifice for sins for the finally impenitent, no escape from the wrath those sins have deserved, but instead of this its full and fearful endurance. But this passage proclaims a more peculiar and very awful doctrine, not obscurely announced in the New Testament, but strangely overlooked in our times, namely, that there are certain sins, probably very rarely committed, which render subsequent conversion impossible. For such sinners grace is no longer to be obtained (reference always being had to the present stage of being); Christ's sacrifice is for them no longer available. The one of these sins is here described, and also in that text, Heb. vi. 4-6. The wretched Spira was an example of this, who, after a pseudo-conversion, died blaspheming and hating God. Satan has infused the fear into some of God's elect people that they had thus unpardonably sinned, but sweet peace has afterwards settled on their spirits. The other unpardonable sin is that against the Holy Ghost (Matt. xii. 31, 32; Mark iii. 28, 29). Winchester considers them as one, but in this is clearly mistaken. This point, like many others, awaits future elucidation. Meantime I would ask those who found upon it an argument, either for Eternism or Finalism, what propriety there would have been in saying of this particular sin that it could not be forgiven either on this side the grave or in that subsequent state of being, whatever it be, that is here alluded to, if it was true that *all* sin unpardoned at death consigned the

sinner to interminable ruin? This argument from the sin against the Holy Ghost, instead of confirming the views it is brought forward to support, furnishes a very strong indirect argument against them. In denying, moreover, that these words really teach the hopelessness of any being's lot, I would remind those who, like Dr Hamilton, draw the conclusion as necessary from them, "that this sin is unpardonable in any state of being," that they forget of how many meanings *αιων* is susceptible. They take for granted that this life is one *aion*, and the eternity beyond the grave the other. Can any of us be so certain he knows *all* the truth, all the particulars of God's deep and transcendent designs?

P. 420. I admit the conclusion, If one single human being be proved to be eternally punished, Universalism falls to the ground.

P. 421. The vessel "may be so marred that it cannot be *repaired*;" but it may be dashed in pieces and then formed anew.

P. 422. No more than Dr Hamilton, would I listen to the suggestion that our Lord, even by means of a proverbial expression, would have exaggerated the doom of Judas.^θ

P. 438. "Shifted view of man, now perishable, then immortal; it leaves him no fixed nature." I confess I see not the great difficulty here. Mr White has well shewn how the two things are compatible.^θ

P. 439. "This transposition of nature cannot be righteous; nor can this violent treatment of either nature be so, seeing it is in opposition to the nature itself." Such vague and misleading ideas are sometimes hid under arguments drawn from this word *nature*, it may be well to enumerate the three different ways in which alone we

can learn what a being's nature is:—1. What we deduce from the nature of things that it *must* be; 2. What we find it ourselves to be; 3. What we learn it from other authority to be. Now if there is any meaning in the objection under review, it is this, that man's nature is in some sense immortal. But how do we know the fact? Not in the first manner here mentioned; for if man were in the nature of things immortal, his immortality would be inherent, which is inconsistent with the fact of his being a creature. Is it by the second method? By our finding, as a matter of fact, that man is immortal? But immortality is not a thing which can be thus known. It cannot be a present possession or property of the creature. To use Dr Hamilton's expression, (though he puts it apparently in the mouth of an adversary), "Immortality flies before him." It is not here as with the attributes of conscience, will, affections, perceptive and reasoning powers, all of which perform their part in the human being as actually existing, and are necessary to make up the idea of him. To remove any one of these properties, would be indeed to subvert the nature of man. It would make him essentially other than he now is. But it is not so with immortality. That he shall cease to exist a thousand years hence, does not change his nature while he does exist. Some people may, indeed, have included in their idea of man's nature that of unbroken continuance for ever; but it is clear that the correctness of this conception cannot be proved by the testimony of experience. We are, therefore, brought to the third test we mentioned; in short, we depend upon intimations from God to decide the question, and the reply given is the point in dispute.

P. 439. "If not, then his life should determine at its

proper limit." Who is to judge what is the proper limit for the soul's life, supposing it not immortal? Its being synchronous with that of the body is a gratuitous assumption. If suffering for sin is due to justice, it cannot on any hypothesis be a "gratuitous infliction."

P. 440. "Since existence is supposed in connexion with these terms, they cannot indicate . . . cessation of existence." Dr Hamilton did not seem to be aware that many, if not most, Destructionists believe in intense suffering before extinction.

P. 441. Worm and fire.θ

P. 442. "Quiet use of the word death."θ

P. 443. "The first impression of corporeal death, &c." Much confusion has arisen from not properly distinguishing between what happens to the soul on the death of the body, and what takes place on its own death. The one event may immediately follow the other, or they may be separated by an indefinite interval of time. On either supposition they are quite distinct. And thus, because "no analogy obliges us to suppose" that the soul should necessarily cease to exist on the death of the body, and other reasons rather lead us to conclude, as Dr H. observes, that its existence then may become more intense than before, we are not the less led to the conclusion that its *own* death is to be defined as cessation of existence.

I see not that any courteous hesitation was needed in making the supposition that Destructionists dwell with greater pleasure on their own view than the Eternist one. Is reality in God's universe so very bad a thing that we need be ashamed of preferring it to what we deem the figments of men? Surely we have not come to this! But while our opponents would shut our mouths from

making the objection that their view is opposed to our sense of right and beauty, they do not spare similar arguments against us.

I rejoice that my soul has not to seek its repose in the cheerless doctrine of final extinction, but when compared with that of endless misery it is strange that any benevolent heart should not feel it a relief. "An interminable capacity for greatness and felicity destroyed," "a flame which might have burned with all the ardour of purity and love extinguished," are sad contemplations; but how inexpressibly more so a capacity for holiness and joy changed into one of unabating wickedness and misery, and a flame burning with all the intensity of blasphemy and hatred!

P. 445. "But then we are reminded," &c. Is it the same or different people who avow and deny this particular principle?

P. 446. *A priori* arguments are here brought forward against destruction. "It looks not like the orderly, prescient, holy, arrangement of the Divine procedure." By this resource "justice is baffled," and "God revokes His own design." The conclusion is unavoidable—In consigning man to eternal misery, God is not viewed as revoking, but as fulfilling His original design. He made the wicked expressly for this end. The idea is revolting. If, however, we choose the only other alternative, that while God created all beings in order to be blest, they perverting His goodness, and the majority proving incorrigible, He has been forced to alter His original purpose—still the doctrine of Destruction is unspeakably preferable to that of Eternism.

The objection against Destruction, that "it calls in Omnipotence for help and extrication," seems to imply that

it is a greater act of power to withdraw the creative energy, and thus to suffer a being to drop into nothing, than to uphold it in existence. Destructionists might rather ask, why God should be supposed to exert His power in continuing to all eternity the being of a creature in guilt and woe, solely to satisfy insatiable justice? Insatiable justice! Inharmonious conjunction! But how avoid the incongruity? Unless, indeed, we substitute for justice another word, and say insatiable—revenge.

P. 447. The *degrees* were in the previous suffering, not the annihilation.

P. 454. "Grant that He formed us for happiness; He must decide its nature." The happiness which Universalists believe in as the ultimate lot of all is of the nature which God approves of. The argument here considered is this—God having formed us, as we believe, for this happiness, He certainly will provide the inward and outward requisites for it.

God's glory.θ

P. 457. "Can sin continue in the scene of retribution?" It will be perceived that the reply to this question, as well as many other remarks, are inapplicable to the scheme of Universalism here broached.

P. 459. "All who believe not the gospel . . . hate God." I cannot let this commonly received notion pass without suggesting a correction. It is most certainly contrary to experience and consciousness, and therefore should be distrusted. There are few that hate God. It would not only be wicked, but *unnatural* in the extreme, were they to do so, where there is anything like a true notion of His character, and His ever-continued and countless mercies are in some small degree recognised. Man is

made to love goodness, and the unrenewed mind *can* approve of what it feels to be justice even though directed against self. And how many sinners mistakenly believe that justice pacified towards them! Do these *hate* God? Some would say, It is not God but an idol, *their* God, whom they love. This is a mere quibble. At best it would only prove they *would* hate God if they knew Him. They have not a divinely inspired love, not one, therefore, which God can recognise; but with their natural hearts they may feel a natural love towards God, just as they do for any other noble being. This belief, so contradictory to the teachings of psychology and daily experience, could never have arisen but for ignorance or forgetfulness of the Scripture idiom, whereby the absence of love, sometimes even inferior love, is termed hatred, as, "If a man hate not his father and mother," &c.

P. 468. "How that moral government *must* secure subjection we cannot understand!" No; moral government alone never has secured, and never will secure willing subjection. *There must be an inward influence too.*

P. 469. "Its glad tidings sound on amidst those gloomy realms." That pardon should be offered and grace obtained in *hell*, is on no Universalist theory a necessary supposition; it is one which we who believe that the sufferings there will end in extinction, must of course reject. But is there no resource remaining in the boundless eternity beyond?

P. 469. "The allegation," &c. We may appeal from Dr Hamilton to himself. In an earlier and admirable part of his work, the lecture entitled, "The Physical and Moral Conditions of Man, deduced from himself," he says, "Our mind judges of moral distinctions with an

irresistible precision and facility." "Indeed the revealed code answers not only to the statutes of universal jurisprudence but to the general opinion, or in Plutarch's phrase, 'the common sentiments of mankind.'" "It is most worthy to be noted that the moral impressions of mankind are so greatly uniform." "Can the exceptions destroy the rule?" "Though eternal rectitude fills the universe, man must be endued with a capacity for it to be its proper subject." I cannot see, therefore, how these sentiments of the human mind which are shocked by the doctrine of eternal punishment, can be said to supply no moral test. Have we two sets of natural perceptions, one wherewith to judge of the proof of a Deity and moral distinctions, and another, not trustworthy, which we can make use of to pronounce on a particular doctrine presented to us by theologians as coming from God? It is not "vaunting human benevolence against the Divine," it is sympathising with the Divine benevolence in which we perfectly confide, by the best means of appreciation we possess, our own benevolence.

P. 470. I am not aware in what connexion Butler uses these words; but I cannot think that he, who laboured so successfully to obtain reconciliation and sanction from our natural moral perceptions for the revealed will of God, would deny the unsophisticated testimony of any of these faculties. What he does most convincingly prove is, the far greater inadequacy of the human faculties to judge concerning the means God, or any other being, will adopt to promote his ends, than what those ends will be. Thus, "We may in any degree be convinced, that a person is of such a character, and consequently will pursue such ends, though we are greatly

ignorant what is the proper way of acting, in order the most effectually to obtain those ends ; and, in this case, objections against his manner of acting, as seemingly not conducive to obtain them, might be answered by our ignorance, though the proof that such ends were intended might not be at all invalidated by it." We *are* called on to judge of the goodness or the reverse of the ultimate aims and purposes of a being, and to use the most effective, though not solitary, test of the genuineness of those ascribed to one we know. Could any divine inform us how else we can, by any possibility, approve of and admire *good* in others, or feel its absence? Writers on theology should be careful how they throw contempt on our natural intellectual and moral faculties. They should have a fear lest they help to incapacitate those whom they thus influence for religion, morality—all, in short, that is true, beautiful, and good. Were not the intellect, heart, and conscience of man works of God? Do we honour *Him* by maligning *them*? Passion, prejudice, selfishness, and ignorance, are strange perverters of the judgment. Still there is in every man an inward standard of right to which we may appeal. How shall I dare to challenge man's admiration for the glorious manifestations of the perfections of God in His word and works ; how shall I dare descant on the sublime and exquisitely refined morality of the gospel, if with my next breath I tell my hearer that his moral test is utterly perverted, his sense of justice not to be depended on, nor his benevolence to be allowed a hearing?

P. 471. "Then the end."θ

P. 473. The awfulness of future punishment renders the salvation from it an unspeakably glorious privilege, which fully justifies the Scripture terms without *such* an

alternative as an eternity of misery. It is very well for Dr Hamilton, in his scepticism, coolly to say, "an interval being allowed," "wilful abuse of life easily rectified;" but one who, in a solemn spirit, weighs the tremendous sentence, will use another language.

P. 475. "We may ask, if any description favours the supposition that they indulge the hope?" Though there is hope—nay, certainty—of their eventual release, *they* may have no hope; despair is probably a part of their curse. "And if there be hope for them in their end, surely its intimation shall not be withheld from them. They shall be allowed, in pity, all the assuagement it can afford." Why suppose this in the case of sinners in a state of simple retribution, when from sufferers here we so often see a bright, reconciling, even earthly future is hidden?

P. 485. I cannot but think that, to ingenuous minds, the value of Dr Hamilton's settled conclusion, that the most extensive meaning must be assigned to terms used to describe the duration of future misery, is likely to be impaired by his designating it as an "idle objection," which he "deemed not worthy of notice," until he had arrived at the concluding pages of his work, that they might have a more restricted meaning. As a philosopher and a philologist, he should have felt that a highly important fact, even though no such *heart-interests* depended upon it. He says, the higher and inferior meaning may interchange, but "invariably in connexions which preclude a possible mistake." This condition he thought the transient character of our earth secured in the case of the everlasting hills; and we think it is no less secured, in the other instance, by the consideration of the perfections of God, and His express promises.—It would be

difficult to apply Dr Hamilton's test to the everlasting priesthood of Aaron, or to the perpetual desolations to spread over the land of Israel, both of which might easily have been supposed from this designation, *if other declarations had not been taken into account*, to be destined to continue while the world endured. If it was necessary that single terms should be so clear as of themselves to settle the point, why were not "the narrower words sufficiently expressive of briefness" employed here?

P. 500. "But is it not found that the most wicked always prefer this view?" Granting this, is it any argument against the view? Time was in this island when the law took a man's life for stealing a purse. If there should not be found a thief in the land who wishes that state of things back again, and does not "prefer" the law as it now stands, does this prove that we have made a retrograde step in this alteration? If the test of truth is, that it is more unpalatable to the natural mind than error, if even natural pleasure in it is to be forbidden, we must be careful not to preach pardon to the convicted sinner. And to how many a sorrow-laden, sin-sick, and self-wearied soul, must we deny a glimpse of that which alone can reconcile it with existence! We might suppose a case, which in its extreme alone is fictitious, of a missionary who had gone to a heathen land and preached to the robbers, murderers, and idolaters there, that there was no pardon in heaven for crime—its first committal brought down inevitable ruin. He might think thus to do well in preserving the still innocent for ever so, heedless of the despair he infused into the rest. If, then, a preacher of the true gospel were to come and proclaim pardon to all, pardon at the eleventh hour, would there be no relief, no pleasure at the tidings? Assuredly

there would ; and the first man might say it was carnal pleasure, and the doctrine which caused it highly promotive of sin. "Do you not see," he might exclaim, "those young hitherto virtuous persons, whom the dread I held forth might for ever have restrained from outward transgression? Now they will plunge into it without restraint, confident as they feel of prolonged life, and assured by you of the efficacy of after-repentance." Would you have the gospel-preacher remind him how he might reason with them as to the uncertainty of life, and of opportunity of future repentance? No, he would feel as well as the other that if this were all, his mode of argument was practically much less *telling* than his opponent's. He would rather speak of the efficacy of that precious *love* which the other had maligned, of the pleas of its present claims and its present riches, and, finally, he might build as on adamant on the all-demolishing argument, that God's truth must be more powerful, as well as more beautiful, than all the devices of man. Just such arguments may we Universalists urge.

P. 489. "Can He lie?" "Well would it be to examine how far this characteristic perfection of the Deity has been the last to be considered and revered."θ

P. 491. "Hard must be our nature to allow the tenet,—harder our nature still, that, allowing it, our conduct continues what it is." It is not necessary nor right to utter such reproaches against those who believe in the fact of eternal punishment. In that, as in other cases, a fact may be believed without its full reality being grasped. Thus, what believer, however firm his hope in it, conceives of the eternity of bliss that awaits him? Thus much, however, we may say, seeing the Eternist's conceptions fall so very short of his convictions, he may

grant the possibility of our conceptions of the wrath awaiting our fellow-men being as influential as his own? We shall surely, too, one and all confess that our convictions put our *feeling* and *conduct* in the matter to the blush.

P. 493. "Their halleluia while the smoke of torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." *θ*

P. 496. "By what stupor are we oppressed? What is it that paralyses our ministry. We need a more fixed faith and impression of what shall be 'the portion of the unbeliever.'" It would be well for those who entertain fears and regrets such as these, to consider if the evils of which they complain, be not in a great part owing to an exhibition of the character and dealings of God on this particular point, so opposed to conscience, as to be altogether unfit to be influential, and from which, for the same reason, belief must often slide away, even when it does not boldly and consciously reject it.

P. 489. "Is it revealed?" "We might expect to find it [Eternism] so interwoven with all the other verities of the system, that to loosen it is to derange the whole."

P. 497. "The shipwreck of faith is commonly made upon this rock." "Dislodge this doctrine, and the entire system is thrown into incongruity and covered with shame."

P. 505. "This we do ingenuously declare, that they (those who assail this doctrine) have struck a blow, which, though many others would only have shaken outwork or battlement, rives the mighty citadel."

The importance of Eternism, viewed as an element in the theological system of which it usually forms a part, according to these statements is evidenced by a sub-

jective fact, and also to be deduced from an objective relationship. As to the assumed subjective fact that the annunciation of this doctrine commonly leads to the relinquishment of the others with which it is usually combined, it is not one that pretends, I believe, to be of the nature of a general experience; I may say as to my particular experience, it does not tend to confirm, but, so far as its limited range extends, it rather goes to disprove the alleged fact. Though, however, a considerable number of instances of an opposite description could be adduced, it would still remain a question what was the right explanation of them. In minds in which the different doctrines that compose what is usually called the evangelical creed, are not held together by the living cohesion of intelligent faith, but the dead cement of authority, it is easy to see how, if the strength of that is impaired in one place, the different parts of the system *may* become loosened, and one after the other fall off and away from the belief. Other explanations of the affirmed fact might be suggested, but while it continues simply an assumed, and not an ascertained one, the attempt may be spared.

Far more formidable is the implied assertion, that the other verities of the Christian faith not only cluster round this doctrine as in willing fellowship with a congenial element, but range themselves around it in obedience to a necessary law, like crystals round their nucleus crystal. An *implied* assertion I have named this, for while it seems a legitimate interpretation of the above quoted sentences, it is scarcely to be thought Dr Hamilton himself would have deliberately chosen Eternism for the nucleus of his doctrinal scheme, nor that, if he did, his Christian brethren generally would have followed him

in it. The principle, however, seems to be an erroneous one, that the fundamental doctrines of Christianity depend for proof or value on each other's support. Election, for instance, does not in this sense hang on the doctrine of imputed righteousness, for though men were saved by their own merits, it would follow inevitably, from the essential attributes of God, that these merits had been foreseen and *foreordained*. Original depravity no way rests for proof on the above-named doctrine either; universal inherent depravity is a fact which unhappily proves itself. The necessity of the influences of the Spirit is independent of all the doctrines named, though it harmonises beautifully with them. The vicarious sacrifice of Christ is independent, as respects its foundation, of Eternism, Finalism, and Universalism, as it has been believed, loved, and *blessed* along with each.

I do not think we can regard any one of these last named doctrines, Eternism, &c., as entering into the *root* of Christianity. Still, as the same root can produce only one kind of growth, it must be one of them, and neither of the others, that is the genuine product of the plant of fundamental truth. The others must have been of man's grafting. The question being thus reinstated, as it seems to me, in its proper position, I leave it to be determined by each individual mind.

While, however, the fear which dictated many of these concluding remarks, which saw in defection from Eternism the prelude to a falling-off from the essentials of gospel truth, must appear to an evangelical Universalist a groundless one, it is impossible not to sympathise with that jealousy breathing in them for the rich old theology, as compared with that neology which

is in many places taking its place, and with the indignant regret at the irreverent and unearnest manner in which well-settled and God-sanctioned truth is by many let go. *Irreverent*, for after having witnessed the seal of the Holy Spirit upon that truth in the reformers and the martyrs, of every age and country, we should all have learned to approach it as containing in its marrow something divine. *Unearnest*, for when it is rejected or given up by those of the school referred to, it is not for the sake of something which appears to contain more of real objective truth, but for some brilliant subjective fancy, some system of clearly human origin, in which elements of truth and error, beauty and deformity have been gathered together, and framed by some gifted idealist into an image answering to his present conceptions, which he, Pygmalion-like, could animate with enough of life to make it to himself at least, and probably to a class of followers too, an object of worship. I here refer chiefly to the state of things in that noble and interesting country once the nursery of the Reformation, but now, alas! the hot-bed of theological phantoms of all descriptions,—*ignes fatui*, decoying ardent minds away from the true light of truth. Far from groundless, however, is the apprehension that these *German notions*, as they are called, are importing to a great extent into this island. Yet such wanderings must be rather sighed over than declaimed against, by one who has perceived that this precious treasure of the old theology, and the blessed Scriptures themselves whence it was drawn, have, by the human element combined with them, been united with errors so opposed to reason and conscience.

It is not necessary, nor possible, perhaps, to trace the whole history of the defection, into which there enters

much complication. . . . Much within, as well as without, forbidding the entire rejection of a revelation supposed to contain in the letter palpable error, there has ensued a disingenuous, or if not this, a trifling mode of dealing with it, and a cessation from that full confidence which is necessary to make it an authority in matters of belief.

The tendency altogether of this state of things is disastrous. The authority of Scripture being so seriously weakened, theoretical errors arise which sap the very foundation of our faith. Inspiration comes at length to be little more than an empty sound; and as a further consequence, wearied with interminable and barren speculations and disputations, which would reconcile the irreconcilable, the fervid youth are content to relinquish the firm footing of objective truth altogether, and reduce all to an ever-changing, ever-yielding chaos of subjectivity. Placed in such a vacuum, the life of the soul must soon languish and expire.

Minds that have thus lost their tone, will not be at all prepared to hail an explicit, definite, *scriptural* doctrine of Universalism. Yet that may, for all this, be one of the best remedies for them.

CHAPTER XX.

ETERNITY OF SIN—MORAL TRIPPLICITY—CASE OF JUDAS.

Supplementary Notes on Dr Hamilton.

SOME, perceiving that the sin of a finite being in finite time must be finite, defend eternity of punishment by the supposed fact that the sufferers in hell go on in sin, thus incurring fresh guilt, which merits fresh punishment, to all eternity. This is the ground taken by Dr Hamilton, who may be supposed to have done his utmost to find out warrants of Scripture for the fact of never-ending sin; but none such does he produce. Though he by and by goes on to say, "Evil exists in unrepressed maturity and strength," his exordium is of a hesitating character: "We may believe that they are not only in a state of sin but a course of sinning," p. 320. But that the good and merciful Creator, who at all events foresaw, if He did not foreordain, all things from all eternity, the wise Architect and Governor whose resource and power are so vast, should not have arranged it better than that sin and sorrow should be endless in multitudes of His creatures; that He who, to end the being of any creature, has only to suspend His action, should thus uphold to all eternity evil both moral and physical—is not a thing lightly to be believed. If the eternity of sin (without which that of punishment is

baseless) be a truth, it is truly surprising that, during so many centuries of zeal for Eternism, no one has discovered a single text that testifies to a fact the doctrinal and practical importance of which, we may humbly presume, would obtain it some mention were it correct.

In fact, the higher, and therefore the juster, our conceptions of the Divine perfections, and the more settled our habit of reasoning from them, (as to be theologians we must constantly do,) the more also shall we be prepared to believe that the subsistence of either misery or imperfection is confined within briefer limits than we at first suppose. Their admission at all is only to be accounted for by the good ends they subserve; and we may rest assured that they last no longer than is absolutely necessary in the eyes of a Being not to be baffled, our admiration of whose wisdom and resource will ever deepen as our knowledge deepens.

At p. 324 the character of the sufferers is held to forbid reformation. Here it is in the first place forgotten, that that of the persons mentioned in the texts cited is not a type of the whole genus, for, as the author himself rightly taught, moral conduct does not secure an unregenerate man from future punishment. Secondly the texts, Dan. xii. 10, Matt. xxv. 11-25, Rev. xxii. 15, all relating to men's characters before the application of punishment and before death, it is idle thence to conjecture what they might be afterwards. The meaning of the last text is that those described as dogs, sorcerers, &c., will be excluded from the blessed city. The terms apply simply to their conduct heretofore, while under probation; and some of the things charged do not admit of being committed in a state of punishment. As to

Rev. xxii. 11 (adduced by another person) the meaning is, that the making known of the contents of the book will not change men's characters.

That the evil spirits "have for thousands of years felt the unsparing wrath of their Judge," p. 328, 9, is a vulgar error in which, it appears, the Fathers did not participate, a fact proved by Whitby in his copious note on 2 Pet. ii. 4, the false translation of which introduced the opinion. Fire awaits those beings in the end, but at present they are at large and active. Though injured by their defection, they are not now undergoing their final doom, about which and its moral results the real question is. The same may be said in relation to the persons mentioned in the texts referred to at p. 327, namely, 2 Chron. xxviii. 22; Rev. xvi. 8-11.

The design of the author in referring to the above, and to Rev. xvi. 21 in next page, was to adduce facts from this life adverse to the opinion that suffering is disciplinary, that is, tends to amend the character, a thing much insisted on by the Correctionists. Observation furnishes facts favourable, sometimes to the one view, sometimes to the other.

I freely allow, what Dr Hamilton does not claim, that the case of those spoken of in Rev. xvi. 21 is that of persons undergoing their final doom. The seventh vial having been poured out as there mentioned, there takes place a destruction of the enemies of the Church in the sight of mankind; and, so far as this verse informs us, the punishment inflicted is far from eradicating sin. The same remark applies to what can be collected elsewhere concerning similar chastisements.

From these facts no conclusion can be drawn of a nature to establish the eternity of sin in the victims,

even supposing us to set aside, for the sake of argument, the many proofs of Destructionism, to say nothing of those which make for the salvation of all. All we are told relates to the beginning of punishment; and it is justly remarked by the Correctionists that, in frequent cases, a chastisement which only exasperates at the commencement subdues in the end. The sufferers are in the hands of the great Disposer, the only Power in the universe, of whose justice we may well expect such subdual unless a termination be otherwise provided for, as apparently it is. We are not told that sin and guilt proceed at an equal pace with punishment, and if they do not, the due measure of the latter will come to be filled up, the last farthing paid, the prisoner released, Matt. v. 26.

The persons regarded in the passages just considered are all in the embodied state, and no proof from Scripture has been adduced of sin after decease. This affords a presumption that the Divine constitution of things is such that that event shall universally bring sin to an end, a thing accordingly to be gathered from sacred writ. We have one proof even in the present translation, for we read at Rom. vi. 7, *For he that is dead is freed from sin*. As often the case, *for* is a mistranslation. The sixth and two following verses form a paragraph by themselves, with this drift respectively. In those reputed to have shared in the crucifixion, the saints, sin will be finally obliterated; no man indeed but will be freed from sin at death; but those first mentioned will also live with Christ. It is implied that the others after a period cease to exist.

To obviate some misconceptions to be apprehended, it may be remarked, in the first place, that common libera-

tion from sin does not produce a common ethical condition. The absence of sin is one thing, the presence of virtue quite another. As God has constituted things, the latter, equally with the former, is required towards entrance into bliss ; and the saints are accordingly filled with love on quitting the body. A Divine principle which exists in them, as embodied, almost in a smothered state, obtains at death a mastery, nay monopoly of the heart.

Secondly, good and evil is an imperfect classification of volitions or acts of the will, these being threefold, namely evil, or indifferent, or good. The last are subdivided according as they stand the Divine test or only the human, a distinction of great importance in its own province, to which we may here devote a short space.

In the British evangelical world it is uniformly taught that no one can see life without conversion ; and conversion, or regeneration, is described by some as including, by others as consisting in, a change in the moral nature, that part of our frame which relates to the will. Those whose views are the clearest and most correct also express themselves, at least when on their guard, as if this change resolved itself into an *addition*, a new motive, something implanted in us that had no existence before. Now it is surely a most interesting question, What is the exact nature of this something ? and, for all our present apathy in relation to such subjects, the time is at hand that hearers and readers will not be satisfied without precision and decision on this and connected points. On the subject of the love required for salvation there is excellent matter, with some alloy, in the works of the New England masters, particularly the elder Edwards and Dr Samuel Hopkins. The reader is advised to study

one of the well-known works of the great Adam Smith, "The Theory of Moral Sentiments," more especially that part which relates to the formation of our benevolent affections.

From this production of a calm inquirer, solid and systematic thinker, who neither vilifies human nature nor unduly exalts it, we may learn how the matter stands in relation to the unregenerate man, in whom it is not denied there is a species (sometimes in large measure) of benevolent affection.

This species, which Smith shews to be the result of a mechanism, we may call *anthropic*, because it is part of ordinary human nature. But those who hold the doctrines of grace and particularly the necessity of regeneration, cannot logically evade the conclusion that there is, in the regenerate man, something *specifically* different, something to be called *epanthropic* love, because it forms an addition to human nature. It is not the result of a mechanism, but *direct* and founded on nothing else, like those propensions of human nature, that in relation to food for example, confessed to be original and fundamental. By this love we become partakers of the Divine nature. It is implanted, and also upheld, by the Holy Ghost, who never finally withdraws His gifts, so that the perseverance of His chosen is infallible.

It may be said that the distinction stated is a nice one, and that it must be extremely difficult for a man to say from which of the two species his benevolent actions proceed. If this be meant for an objection, it rather tells the other way, for Scripture does not represent it as an easy thing, even for the individual himself, to say whether he have really passed from death unto life. This is part of the trial of the saints, instead of complaining of

which, or betaking himself to cavils or illegitimate stays of any sort, a man will do well to attend to the main, though not sole, scriptural instruction on the subject, which is, that his comfort in regard to his own estate will be proportioned to the earnestness and exactness of his obedience.

The opinion most commonly received, and not without scriptural warrant, is that Adam and Eve were possessed of love to God before their fall. If they would speak intelligibly, and also in consistence with known facts, those of this opinion are bound to maintain that our first parents had an *epanthropic* love to God, for otherwise they will not have been *specifically* different from multitudes of their descendants that have died unrenewed. It will be denied by no cool observer, that some at all events of the unregenerate evidence an unmistakeable delight in thinking of the blessedness of the Supreme Being, and a desire to promote His honour and what they conceive to be His designs. It is true, what Scripture calls love, whether to God or man, is universally absent till conversion, and since the fall the converted have been a very small minority; but these things do not establish the absence, in any one individual, of what man calls love or benevolence, that beautiful thing but for which the wheels of human life and society would stop. Even as to love to God, if the bulk of mankind exhibit little, it is mainly because they think the Supreme to stand in no need of their love, a truth from which they draw a wrong inference. We are nearly right in describing them as in a state of *indifference*.

In common life every one recognises the triplicity stated (the evil, the indifferent, the good), both in himself and others. No one but speaks as if there were a

large class of acts which may be called indifferent, worthy of neither praise nor blame. We also recognise a triplicity in the way we are regarded by others. Some few perhaps bear us ill-will, others desire our good, the most are indifferent in the matter, and do us neither good nor evil.

Unfortunately this triplicity is one of the things which, though fully understood, acknowledged, and acted upon by mankind at large, and by theologians themselves in other matters, they are extremely apt to forget in their sermons, books, and even standards of doctrine, from which circumstance has proceeded an abundance of error and false reasoning. The mistake is partly to be accounted for by a want of familiarity with a trope common to Hebrew and Hellenistic, whereby the contrary is put for the privative, that is, the opposite of a thing for the want of it. In this way *good* means no more than *not bad*, *bad* no more than *not good*, to *hate* no more than *not to love*, not allow love to operate (Luke xiv. 26), *enemy* no more than one in whom there is *no friendship* to the party.

To understand the true meaning of Scripture, as indeed of books generally, we should bear in mind and apply, on all needful occasions, the facts and principles which common life and daily experience supply. When we find in the Bible something flatly contradicted by experience, we may be sure that our interpretation of it is wrong, whether the error be owing to a false translation or not. For example, it is taught by all psychologists of any repute for sobriety or correctness, that in human nature there is no principle which *in itself* is evil, though many which often lead to evil, conscience being often unable to curb their undue indulgence. And yet we

read in books, and hear in sermons, a doctrine the most opposite imaginable. Unmindful of the results of systematic inquiry, and of what they ought to know of themselves and others, some insist that the unrenewed man hates God. To proclaim from the pulpit, perhaps with emphasis, what many a hearer's self-consciousness and observation tell him is a mistake, is not the way to promote the gospel.

To go by some men, there is no great difference between our species and the evil spirits, so vehement and wanting in discrimination are the terms they use concerning unrenewed human nature. The difference between the two is extremely simple. In the evil spirits there is a hatred to God; in man, before regeneration, only an absence of that love to God which is of a nature to be acceptable.

Thirdly, if we would form a calm and correct judgment on a question which regards the future, a future widely different, it may be, from the present, whatever our loose theories may say to the contrary, it is essential that we guard against a most unhappy thralldom of the mind, enditchment in actualities. The insects that pass their life on their native leaf, whose colour they bear, have their counterparts in numerous minds; and the near and present, especially when of a nature to move the feelings, seldom fail unduly to affect our first judgments. Hence the memorable remark of Dr Johnson, that we are raised in the scale of thinking beings by what makes the past, the distant, or the future, predominate over the present.

At natural death, confessedly an epoch in the history of the soul, it passes from the embodied into the disembodied state, and into a new scene, concerning which,

and the phases of the new existence, reasonings grounded on what holds in the old are of small value. It may be the pleasure of the wise Disposer, in whose government uniformity of design is combined with vast diversity in procedure, that there shall be more novelties in the new condition than its bare definition implies. So far there is no presumption *a priori* against the obliteration of sin in the whole of the deceased, a thing in harmony with the character of God. As holy, He must desire the earliest erasure of sin consistent with His designs; as merciful, that fresh guilt shall not be incurred.

It is true, sin is ineradicable in this life, even where Divine grace is found; but independent of grace (which is not at our command) much is practicable for the moral improvement of mankind. Were civil government administered on better principles, and were there more zeal on the subject mentioned, and—what is of more importance than zeal in this case—a sounder acquaintance with the means to be employed, we might witness surprising results. Those whose opinion is most worth are slow to believe any man irreclaimable. Innumerable facts respecting the individual, the class and the mass, shew us how potent situation and circumstances are to modify character. Now the change in circumstances wrought by death is extremely important, even judging by our imperfect information. As putting an end to emfleshment, with the connected wants and propensions, it must cut short numerous vices (particularly those connected with corporeal indulgence and property) by removing what they spring from. As even here conscience is often obeyed by the worst of men, and the removal of what now mainly resists it goes to strengthen its authority, the universal abolition of sin beyond the

grave, in virtue of the Divine constitution that regulates the new mode of existence, almost appears a result to be expected.

The present differs widely from the doctrine of the Correctionists, who ascribe purification to punishment, not death, as the proximate cause, and also maintain that punishment works on the victim a change whereby he is made acceptable and received into favour. For that, however, love is required as well as purity, and the former is bestowed only on the elect. The others perish, but in due time are made the subjects of redivival.

Correctionists maintain the fire of future punishment to be a purifier. In part of mankind, say they, there is laid in this life a sufficient foundation of purity and perfection hereafter; but in another part there is need for a further process, which consists in fatherly correction. With regard to the use of emblems by those of this opinion, no fault can be found on general principles. It is admitted on all hands that in Scripture fire appears as emblematical of what purifies; nor is there anything contrary to the genius of its language in describing the fire hereafter as consuming the sin, the imperfection, or the guilt, of the sufferers. The Correctionist system is also in perfect harmony with the Divine attributes, very different in this from the Eternist.

Whether it describe things according to the plan actually pursued by God, is a distinct question. Proofs have been given of future punishment being destructive of existence, a constitution of things, be it here remarked in brief, which, coupled with redivival, answers all the conditions pleaded for on general principles by Correctionists. As to the long blank of being which we hold to precede redivival, it is allowed by Dr Southwood

Smith, an exceedingly able writer on the Correctionist side, that no creature has a right to existence. "The Divine Government," 4th edition, p. 266. At p. 347, he further says, "It is true that, in a popular sense, the wicked, after they have endured the punishment which their sins deserve, may be said to be exempted from further suffering on the ground of justice; but still, if they are permitted to enjoy future happiness, it is obvious that all that happiness is the gift of pure goodness." Nothing more sound than all this, and we adhere to the same principles in adding, that if the creature has no claim to existence, neither has it to its continuance, and that if the happiness spoken of, instead of commencing immediately, is postponed for a long time, still it is the gift of pure goodness.

Independent of the mistake of supposing the actual plan of God to be as the Correctionists maintain, there are various things in this volume in which we cannot join, but the great merit of the work in certain respects is undeniable. It is perspicuous, candid, and manly throughout. What the author says in reference to the Divine goodness and justice, as irreconcilable with the Eternist scheme, is remarkably pertinent and weighty; and his refutation of the fallacies adduced in its favour, more especially of those claiming to rest on general principles, is most commonly clear, compact, and decisive.

ON THE CASE OF JUDAS.

With the exception of a particle at the beginning on which little turns, the original is the same in Matt. xxvi. 24 and Mark xiv. 21, and in our common version both texts are rendered in much the same way. The

former runs thus : “ *The Son of Man goeth as it is written of him ; but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed ! It had been good for that man if he had not been born.* ” We have to inquire whether this last sentence be correctly rendered, and supposing the contrary to be made out, then what would be a correct version.

The Greek is *Καλὸν ἦν αὐτῷ εἰ οὐκ ἐγεννήθη—ὁ ἀνθρώπος ἐκεῖνος* : *Calon ēn autō ei uc egennēthē—ho anthropos ekeinos*. It will be perceived that in printing, a break has been introduced before the last three words, which is meant to introduce the remark, that what precedes it would have sufficed, had Christ meant to say that it had been better for his betrayer not to have been born. In the absence of the remainder the English would be : *It were well for him if he had not been born*, or something of the like import. But as indubitably that remainder exists in the text, the nature of its connexion with the foregoing requires to be fixed.

In the first place, it will be obvious to any one possessed of the elements of Greek, once the state of the case has been pointed out, that our translators have settled the connexion in a way repugnant to one of the first principles of syntax. The after portion, a noun with its concordant article and pronominal adnoun, is in the first or nominative case, not in the third or dative. Consequently it is not governed by *καλόν*, *calon*, nor is it translated *for that man*, but simply *that man*, which, as we shall see, comes to *that character*. The transgressions of the laws of the language in the received version are neither few nor slight, but this is among the most palpable.

This first version then, which we find in the Peshito Syriac and various other versions of ancient times, and

in the great majority at all events of the modern ones into English, French, and Italian, must be abandoned as quite untenable. We proceed to the second, that supposed to be found in the Vulgate, which runs: "Bonum erat ei si natus non fuisset (in Mark, *esset*) homo ille." This is rendered in the Douay, *It were better for him if that man had not been born*. Luther and Piscator (Fischer) in substance adopt this in Matthew, but in Mark follow the first way of taking the words, a self-contradiction also observable in the Arabic of the Paris and London Polyglotts. In both places Stolz adopts the first mode, Bengel and Van Ess the second.

Of the two, then, the latter has the greater testimony for it in Germany; but in that as in other countries, and in this age of the Church as in all that have preceded it, the bulk of men interpret as if the first version were the true one. This proceeds from the difficulty of eliciting any intelligible and admissible sense if we suppose two distinct persons to be spoken of. Christ is the only second one that can be imagined, and it is hardly to be supposed that he would have called himself *that man*, especially after speaking of the betrayer under that designation.

The conclusion is thus forced upon us that there is some third way of taking the words, grounded on something that has been overlooked. In fact, there is no occasion to make *that man* into a dative, nor yet to apply it to another than Judas, it being a sort of predicate to the verb it is connected with, not its subject. On this footing we may render, *It were well for him not to have been born to be that character*.* In Latin and Greek, as

* An instance of *meiosis*, or conveying a strong sense by means of weaker words. On another occasion the writer observed that, had the common reading been correct, the conclusion $\delta \alpha \nu \theta \rho \acute{\omega} \pi \omega \varsigma \epsilon \kappa \epsilon \iota \nu \omega \varsigma$ was quite superfluous.—A.

at this day in the oriental languages, the ellipsis of the substantive verb, as it is called, is of constant occurrence. With regard to its infinitive *to be*, it needs to be supplied in numerous places of the New Testament, some of which are noticed in our English Bible, for instance Acts v. 31 and Romans i. 1. As to *that character*, we ourselves use *man* in that sense, which ought to be familiar to the readers of a book which distinguishes the new and the old man.

CHAPTER XXI.

EXAMINATION OF THE FIVE PASSAGES MAINLY RELIED
ON BY ETERNISTS.*Part I.—Of Mark ix. 43–49.*

THIS famous passage, read according to the Vatican and other good manuscripts, I render as below. In certain minutiae of difficult determination there may be mistakes, but these cannot affect the question before us.

Ver. 43. "Should thine hand have greatly seduced thee, cut it off: it is better thou shouldest pass into life maimed than, having both hands, go into hell, that intense fire." *

Ver. 45, 47–49. "In like manner, should thy foot be a snare to thee, cut it off: It is better thou shouldest pass into life lame than, having both feet, be cast into hell; and should thine eye be a snare to thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to pass into the kingdom of God one-eyed than, having two eyes, be cast into hell, where their decay doth not stop, nor any fire intermit, as every one is to be destroyed *solely* by torment."

There are few versions of Scripture without instances of the thing signified being substituted for the figurative term, with a view to clearness. On the present occasion *worm* is replaced by *decay* in ver. 48, and *fire* by torment in ver. 49.

* Ver. 44, 46, are omitted as not found in the Vatican.—A.

We are not concerned with the 50th verse, which treats of a different subject, and begins by saying that salt, that is love, is good. It would appear that at an early period some one made a marginal note which, in harmony with Lev. ii. 13, says, "Accordingly every sacrifice must be seasoned with salt." As many have observed, the instances have been not few of comments, in their own nature not amiss, having crept into the text through the carelessness of scribes. The result was remarkably unfortunate in the present case, for it was annexed to the preceding words, with which it has nothing to do; and ver. 49, thus made up, has tortured the commentators of all ages and countries. According to Bloomfield in his Greek Testament with English notes, perhaps no passage in it has so defied all attempts to give it any certain interpretation; and, though skilful in compression, he says he cannot detail, much less review, a tenth of the attempts. Even in the most plausible he finds abundance of gratuitous assumption and absurdity. So far he is right, but he himself leaves the subject as dark as ever. This is one of the cases in which the admission, and then false connexion, of spurious words, creates an enigma beyond the strongest faculties to solve.

As to some other words omitted here, (also by Tischendorf) the verdict of the Vatican manuscript is as usual confirmed by internal evidence. They add nothing to the sense of the passage, and mostly interrupt its flow. But the barrenness of this spurious matter in point of information will not have made it barren in point of effect; quite the contrary. By darkening the whole passage, and reiterating awful images, it will have nourished an unreflecting terror, and a confusion of ideas, friendly to Eternism.

So much for the words of the original text, the main foundation, at least philological foundation, of all exegesis. The next thing is punctuation, the vast importance of which, though demonstrable with the utmost ease, is understood, practically at least, by extremely few. A man is not bold in affirming that, had it pleased the Holy Ghost with words of authority to give points also, upwards of half of our dubieties, things often of very difficult settlement, had been settled to our hand. It deserves most especial remark that the absence of an authorised interpunction, joined to the other fact that Providence so disposed things that the text itself suffered a good deal of corruption, forms a complete proof what was the Divine purpose as to scriptural knowledge. It was intended that darkness should prevail for a space. Without settled convictions as to the past and present existence of this darkness, as also a cheering hope of its being to terminate, and perhaps soon, a man is ill equipped for biblical inquiry. He wants one of the accoutrements.

It is allowed on all hands that pointing, as only of human authority, may be adjusted at our pleasure with a view to obtaining a new and better sense, provided we respect the laws of the language; but this liberty is hardly used at all on the present occasion.

But thirdly, it is not enough that we have before us a correct text correctly pointed. It requires to be correctly translated, a task for which it is hardly to be supposed our forefathers were well qualified. I have been engaged for nineteen years in a new version of the New Testament, during which time my esteem for the current one has been constantly abating. Not to mention a great variety of other things, including the darkness in its

authors' minds inherited from Popery and the Vulgate, they were ignorant, as to Greek, of at least a score of important things now familiar to scholars. The translators among the Reformers were full of the Vulgate, in which they were brought up, and they conformed to it the rather that they were naturally very reluctant to have new matters of controversy with the Papists, in addition to the momentous questions already in debate. By transmission from those Reformers, from generation to generation, conformity to the Vulgate still subsists to a degree no way friendly to biblical or theological accuracy. Jerome, its author, was learned and zealous, but his theology was scanty, confused and unstable; and his strength did not lie in Greek, nor in Latin, which last he wrote very ill. His devotedness to Hebrew marred his Latin, he tells us. He is far more valuable, Hebrew scholars tell us, in the Old Testament than the New, the vulgate of which, as before Europe at the Reformation and now, is thought to have been a good deal corrupted, so as to deviate from what was written by Jerome, who also in part acquiesced, contrary to his own judgment, in what was already current in the way of translation into Latin.

Those spoken of in the passage before us are commonly, and correctly, thought to be persons inordinately given to certain vices, the occasions of which are figured by *hand*, *foot*, and *eye*. In regard to their punishment, we are here taught that it is, 1, severe; 2, destructive of being; 3, incessant; and we are taught nothing else, nothing for example about its duration, whether for days, months, years or generations. That it is not for eternity follows of course from its being extinctive. We thus learn to reject two doctrines, *Eternism*, which teaches

everlasting punishment, and *Correctionism*, according to which the soul is so amended by future punishment that the Supreme Being sees fit to release it from pain and finally make it happy. That all are finally beatified we firmly believe, but not according to the process held by the Correctionist.

In ver. 43d *kai* is rendered *greatly*, in ver. 45th *in like manner*. This little word, by far the most important in the language, is extremely ductile, from not being aware of which some persons stultify many a passage in writers secular and sacred. No lexicographer has yet done justice to *kai*, though the well-known ductility of the corresponding word in Hebrew, and materials to be found in the writings of the most acute Hellenists, should have awakened searching attention to it. A good beginning has indeed been made in what is probably our best Lexicon, that of Liddell and Scott, where it is remarked that the matter given, which is far more copious and ramified than the common, is little more than an outline of the manifold usages. If, however, any person cling to the hereditary "and," he is quite welcome, as nothing is affected by it in the matter before us.

The words *εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον*, ver. 43, are rendered "into that intense fire."

Supposing this version a mistake, and that we must revert to that of the current version, "into the fire that never shall be quenched," or something approaching to it, for example "into the unextinguishable fire," the Eternist argument gains nothing by it. As to the latter term, *unextinguishable*, in no language is it tantamount to *eternal*. Its real force when metaphorical may be seen from the facts of nature and life, the proper basis and test of figurative language. Were a fire to break out

in London to-night and prove inextinguishable, it would burn down the great metropolis, it may be; but after that it would die out for want of fuel. The word is understood with this limitation in all languages. Speaking of the partly synonymous word *ἀκαμάτος*, Passow, a lexicographer of the highest name, describes it, when combined with the word for *fire*, as denoting one which with indefatigable activity spreads and devours so long as it has fuel, *so lang es Stoff hat*. Even when, by a liberty taken with the text, we have in English "into the fire that never shall be quenched," the expression, though by the translators meant to convey eternity, does not convey it. Whether in uninspired or inspired writings the terms *ever*, *always*, and the like for continuance are used with vastly more frequency of what lasts for a long time, or does not expire within an understood limit, than what is eternal; and the same remark applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the term *never* when it regards the future. In many cases it is only a strong negative.

But in fact *ἀσβεστος* in all the three places of its use in the New Testament—that before us, Matt. iii. 12 and Luke iii. 17, the two last being parallels—is to be rendered "intense," a meaning very similar to that found in various lines of the *Iliad*. Joined with the word for *laughter* in Book i. line 599, as also in the *Odyssey*, Book viii. line 326, it is perhaps to be rendered *vast* (*unermessliches* of Voss) or *hearty*. It would be absurd in the extreme to ascribe to it, in those passages, any reference to eternity, or even to a lengthened space of time. In his *Lexicon "Homericum et Pindaricum,"* Damm handles the word well upon the whole, though not going far enough in substituting for *inextinguishable* some term, as *hot*, *bright*, or the like, that bespeaks intensity. What

is most interesting to know is the force of the epithet when combined with *βον*, war-cry, battle, and *φλοξ*, flame. It is used with the former in five places of the Iliad, where Damm correctly renders *pugna fervida*, hot conflict. In Book xvi. line 123, in combination with *φλοξ*, it means *blazing flame*, as Cowper perceived. In the preceding line *ἀκαμαντος* means *unquenchable*.

In the passages mentioned, and some others, translators have in general felt that there can be no reference to continuance, and in various instances they reach or approach the truth, guided by the general idea of intensity.

This function of the word will not surprise those who consider its formation. It is proximately derived, in the way of negation, from *σβεστος*, *dead*, according to Stephanus, so that its negative should describe a fire as *lively, active, intense*. We ourselves speak of a *quick fire* and *live coals*. By analogy *hot* or *quick* lime was called *ἀσβεστη*.

We shall soon see that the punishment spoken of in Mark is *destructive* and *incessant*. It is to be supposed that *ἀσβεστος* relates to something else, and what can that be but *severity*? In the other two passages destruction is implied in the verb itself, which does not mean to *set on fire* but actually to *consume*. Where a fire actually consumes, it is superfluous to describe it as *not quenched*, or not quenchable, but the term *intense* adds to our information.

We now proceed to the 48th verse and the main question, the figurative force of the term *worm*, to determine which it may be remarked, in the first place, that with the exception of those who deny all future punishment, who need not be argued with or taken into account, all

are agreed that throughout this passage the term *fire* denotes *misery* or its cause. To those really acquainted with the manner of the New Testament writers, this will be a sufficient proof that *worm* denotes something different.

Secondly, that it does so is to be inferred from its own nature. In Hebrew and Greek this class of terms designates, in the literal and metaphorical way, earth-worms, moths, maggots and the like, creatures whose function is to *waste, consume, destroy*. When a corpse is interred, the soft parts are gradually consumed by worms; moths and animalcules of some sorts eat away garments; and so in other cases. When the topic is the extinction of a thing, such as power, or that of a soul, such creatures yield appropriate emblems; but it is far otherwise when the bare infliction of pain is spoken of. In modern Europe we are no doubt in the habit, some of us, of speaking and writing about the *gnawing worm of conscience*; but such trespasses against taste are traceable to the erroneous interpretation of the text before us, an interpretation which took its rise in a very dark period, and has maintained its ground ever since. Sometimes a misinterpretation of Scripture vitiates language itself, a second instance of which we have in the terms *Magdalene* and *Magdalene asylum*, which originated in the opinion, now held by no well-informed person, that Mary of Magdala had led a bad life.

On 2 Tim. iii. 6, Bloomfield cites from Athenæus five lines of the poet Anaxilas, who describes flatterers as the worms of men of fortune, his meaning in which he brings out by adding that they live at their expense and waste their means. As known to all, such characters do not inflict pain, but owe their success to their flattery being

agreeable. So far as I know, no Eternist has so much as pretended to have found in the writings of the Greeks one precedent to justify his interpretation of the term *worm* in the passage before us.

Scripture abounds in contrasts between the fleeting and the durable, one of the many proofs of its good sense and philosophical accuracy. The more reflective our character and collected our frame, the deeper also is our sense of the importance of duration. The transient is little to be considered, be it happy or be it the reverse. Strong terms are used in Scripture respecting the bliss of the righteous, but more stress is laid, and with reason, on its durable nature. As to those visited with the Divine wrath in the scene to come, their punishment is described as severe, but vastly more emphasis is laid, and again with abundant reason, on its leading to extinction. That extinction lasts for the remainder of this current *aion*, a space of time of immense length. For all this space to lose the exquisite bliss which, were they of a different character, would fall to their lot, is an extremely heavy amercement. Compared with this, the punishment by *privation*, that which consists in *positive suffering* sinks into insignificance in the eyes of the reflecting. For this reason, and because there are Scriptures that mention *positive woe*, this is taken for known (no mention made of it) in other Scriptures—a single term, *death* for example, being used for extinction of being and its adjunct, previous penal suffering.

This elliptical mode of writing, in which there is nothing to astonish us, is however misunderstood by two classes of disputants. One man, from *destruction* being so prominent in Scripture diction, loses sight of *penal infliction*; another, an Eternist, loses sight of *destruction*,

because he is able to prove that the *death, destruction, perdition* spoken of is not instantaneous, and that after receiving its sentence the soul does subsist and in a state of woe. He does not reflect that to prove all this is achieving but little. It must be shewn, not simply that the soul exists, but that its existence is prolonged, and that without break of being or change of condition, to all eternity. With regard to any of the terms cited, it is not enough to prove that it does not exclude *suffering*, as a thing comprised in the lot of those concerned: nothing to the purpose is effected unless proof is produced that the term excludes *extinction*.

What has been said applies perfectly to the term *worm*, which is used in theological writings, whether inspired or not, to denote the destruction of the soul, but a destruction conceived as gradual, the figure here being still in agreement with the facts of nature, for the worm is not rapid in its movements or in despatching its work of consumption. As, moreover, in the Divine constitution of things, this gradual process [of soul destruction] is also a painful one,* it need not surprise us occasionally to find the term *worm* so used as to include pain in the meaning conveyed; but nothing of this sort helps the Eternist to his view on the text before us, towards which it is necessary to cast out all allusion to destruction.

It is easy to produce, from the Old Testament and the Apocrypha (which is often of great use in regard to the meaning of words) instances of the term *worms* denoting *destruction, extinction, wasting, decay, nothingness*, or the like. In the 2d of 1st Maccabees, verses 62 and 63 are

* This is the aspect of the process presented in a citation from Rabbi Isaac in Wetstein on the text, *Vermis mortuo tam est molestus quàm acus carni viva.*

thus given in the Douay version:—" *And fear not the words of a sinful man, for his glory is dung and worms. To-day he is lifted up, and to-morrow he shall not be found, because he is returned into his earth, and his thought is come to nothing.*" Here "*worms*" relates to these last words. The prophetic King of Babylon is thus addressed, Isa. xiv. 11, current version:—"Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee." By the latter part is meant that extinction will overtake all his greatness and also himself. When therefore we read in Ecclesiasticus vii. 17, of Bretschneider's edition, that the vengeance on the ungodly man is fire and worms, (in the original both terms are in the singular) we may understand fire as torment and worms as extinction. The like applies to Judith xvi. 17, where the author speaks of the opponents of his nation, whom the Almighty will visit with fire and worms in the day of retribution. Here *εἰς σαρκας αὐτῶν*, in the plural, is explained by the fact that before the final judgment comes the resurrection of the body, so that the victims have two lives to lose, that of the body and that of the soul. It concludes, *καὶ κλαύσονται ἐν αἰσθησει ἕως αἰῶνος*, and *they will wail for pain to their lives' end*. To render the last words "to eternity" is to contradict what has just been intimated by the word *worms*, which conveys extinction.

In the 51st of Isaiah, after an exhortation to the saints not to be disheartened by the evil treatment of them by enemies, the 8th verse adds:—"For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool; but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation." When the

Septuagint takes a liberty with the form and letter of its original, it is commonly instructive in a high degree, and its marvellous insight is exhibited with peculiar brightness. Here, instead of *moth* it has *time*, which gives the precise sense. Every hour that passes eats away the dominion of the hostile, which will expire at the appointed time; and as to themselves, the coming vengeance will obliterate their being. With regard to the oppressed again, the divine principle planted in them, and the salvation therewith connected, are durable.

Και τὸ πῦρ οὐ σβέννυται, nor any fire intermit.

Here we have first to notice a common Greek idiom, totality expressed by *ὁ, ἡ, τὸ*, the word that, as its most common use, functionates as the article. Unless a man know this idiom and attend to it, the point of numerous passages is missed, and perhaps complete confusion introduced. We have an instance of the idiom at the beginning of the eleventh to the Romans, where according to the current version it runs: "I say then, Hath God cast away His people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin." The inference from the former part of the verse is that God had not cast off the Jews, an inference contrary to the fact. The real inquiry is, Hath God cast off His entire people? This is answered in the negative, confirmed by Paul's adducing himself as a converted man. God had cast off the nation, but not so as to shew favour to no member of it. It is thus allowable to translate "nor any fire intermit," by which is meant that, like those mentioned Rev. xiv. 11; xx. 10, they have no intervals of ease, but are tormented day and night, and that this is the lot of every one of them.

In reference to the verb *σβέννυμι* it is necessary to

distinguish two things, uninterruptedness and perpetuity. The former is found in the existence of a man from birth to death, there being no gaps to be seen. On the other hand, as seldom exceeding seventy years, the life of man ranks low in the scale of perpetuity. Day again, which has already been known for thousands of years as all agree, ranks comparatively high in that scale, but not in that of uninterruptedness, alternating with night as it always does. In the national fires of the Jews, Greeks and Romans, which were called *sacred*, both things were attended to. They continued from age to age, and also throughout the twenty-four hours.

The latter is required in Leviticus vi., verse 12th, and the former in verse 13th. In the Septuagint, as in the Hebrew, the phraseology is the same in the two cases, *οὐ σβεσθησεται*, from which we learn that in our text *οὐ σβεννυται* admits of either meaning; but the presumption is against that of perpetuity. The keeping a fire up for generations is an extremely rare thing; but people are familiar with the keeping it up from hour to hour or suffering it to go out, especially by night. The force of words, what they are apt to suggest to the mind, if there be nothing to the contrary, is greatly determined by the use made of them in common life. [Hence in translating from another language] though, mostly from indolence and uninquiry, the principle is often carried in practice to a very pernicious extreme, it is yet correct to say that the commonest sense of a word or expression deserves a preference when claims are otherwise equal. This is one ground for supposing that the *οὐ σβεννυται* of Mark does not describe the fire simply as *lifelong* (a species of perpetuity) but as *uninterrupted, incessant*. What is lifelong may not be incessant. We make an

incessant use of air, but not of light or artificial heat. In a passage, moreover, which has the air of treating the subject in full, it is natural to expect some allusion to what is implicitly or explicitly taught in other books, as in Rev. xiv. 11, namely the incessancy of the suffering, there being no intervals of rest. Lastly, we are led to the same conclusion by what appears to be the true force of the concluding words of the passage, to which we proceed.

The verb *ἀλίζω*, *halizo*, comes from *ἄλς*, *hals*, or *ἄλας*, *halas*, salt, a substance the foundation of various emblems, particularly in Scripture and its mirror, that is the East. In the first place, because of its giving a relish to victuals, it comes to denote what is of a nature to recommend a person, as love to God, sincerity in an engagement, wit (Attic salt), wisdom, beauty, expression of features. These things are regarded simply as in actual existence, with no reference to durability or the reverse. But secondly, as salt is antiseptic under certain conditions, it is used to denote preservation. It is under this aspect that the Easterns speak of eating, or having eaten, a man's salt, by which they understand the enjoyment from him of a maintenance, the means of life and comfort. Further than this you seldom hear them use salt in this second sense. Their minds are more familiar with a third, now to be mentioned. As salt is septic under certain conditions, and its presence often highly noxious, it is used as an emblem of destruction, desolation, non-existence, in Scripture and the East, in which quarter much land is made barren, and much water unserviceable, by the presence of one or more sorts of salt. The Dead is also called the Salt Sea. The subject is illustrated by the following Scriptures, Deut.

xxxix. 23 ; Jud. ix. 45 ; Job xxxix. 6, where what is rendered *barren land* is *salt places* in the Hebrew ; Ps. cvii. 34, where the word *barrenness* in the English corresponds to *saltness* in the Hebrew ; Jer. xvii. 6 ; Ezek. xlvi. 11 ; Zeph. ii. 9.

The things stated are in substantial agreement with what has been, and is held by persons of all different doctrinal sentiments. It may surprise some persons that the emblematical force is so various, and particularly that opposites, *preservation* and *destruction*, should be figured by the same substance ; but in fact cases of this nature are not rare in the emblematical language of the Bible and the East, which are one. In the case of salt, as has been seen, there are facts in nature that correspond to these opposed uses, which equally holds in other instances. For the interpretation of figurative language, however, facts in nature are not the only help. If a knowledge of emblems favours progress in theology ; in return, the latter reflects back a powerful light.

Whether a word is to be called figurative or not, the circumstances that it bears two exactly contrary meanings is not peculiarly calculated to breed confusion. The difficulty of choice is according to nearness, not to remoteness. We may fail to discriminate what are only nice shades of difference, when the broad distinction between opposites would strike us at once. Hence various nations have put up with what some may consider a most inconvenient absurdity. In Greek a good many words bear opposite meanings ; and this class is so numerous in Arabic that writers on the subject have provided it with a name.

In what is before us, we have to choose between the contraries *preservation* and *destruction*, the former always

contended for by Eternists, the latter in harmony with the Destructionist theory. It matters not that little is to be adduced in the way of precedents* seeing that by virtue of its parentage, the word may denote either thing according to the context. Now that context, and the illustrative text in Isaiah, have already been interrogated, and they give a decided support to the Destructionist side.

Part II.—Texts in which we find αἰών or αἰώνιος, (aῖōn or aῖōnios).

Aristotle considered αἰών, (aῖōn), to be as it were αἰώνων, (aḗi ōn), what lasts for ever, and some moderns adopt this account of it, though the reputation of the ancients in matters of etymology does not stand high. The truth seems to be that the two words, instead of being mother and daughter, are sisters, and that αἰ, αἰών, αἰδώς, (aidios) which in the classics is the commonest term for eternal, as also αἰδής, (aīdes), which means Hades or the unseen future state, are from a common origin. They are all compounded of the first vowel used as a negative and some fragment of the verb εἶδον, (eidon), I saw.

But the aspect in the case of the term last named, and in the others, is different. The state after death is designated by a word the etymological force of which is *unseen*, simply because we do not now see or experience that state; but the idea in the word for eternity is that it is impossible to see its limit. Because it is endless, no being can witness its end. When we see a visible object, we see it by some bounding lines; and what the

* In Isa. li. 6, the parallel verb in Hebrew is correctly rendered *vanish away*.

mind's eye sees it identifies, and separates* from other things, by certain *determinants* that single it out. Hence it is agreed that the Greek *ὁραω*, (*horaō*), I see, comes from a word that signifies limit. Attention to this, and the drift of the passage, will in part enable us to correct Col. i. 15, which is thus given in the authorised version, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature." For *of the invisible God* if we substitute *of the dateless Being*, we have what suits the subject, which is the antiquity of Christ. The invisibility of the Supreme is here quite irrelevant.

The account just given of the etymology of the Greek noun expressive of *eternity*, which of course applies to the adnoun derived from it expressive of *eternal*, classes them at once, under this point of view, with the corresponding Hebrew family, '*olam*,† &c., which is always supposed radically to refer to what is *unknown* or *unseen*. As they started from the same point, it is not wonderful that they ran the same course. The parallelism between the two families in respect of application is all but complete.

This does not prevent our at first feeling some surprise at certain of the applications. The Greeks, equally with ourselves, contrasted time and eternity, the limited and limitless, in what they wrote on philosophy and theology; and one might have supposed they would have abstained from any use of terms in the least calculated to confound a distinction so marked. But precisely because it was so marked there was little danger of confusion to those brought up in the language; and there was in the

* The Latin *videre*, to see, is of a family with the old *idivare*, to divide.

† With this family is etymologically connected the Latin *olim*, of old, hereafter, for a long time, &c.

ancient mind a principle, howsoever to be accounted for, that naturally originated other applications. They classed together as a genus, though without losing sight of specific differences, the *infinite* and what may be called the *exequate* or *commensurate* ;* and in many cases the same terms were used in discoursing of either, a circumstance that may lead a modern translator into error. We have an instance in the word *ἀπερὲσιος*, (*aperetsios*), which pretty frequently occurs in the Iliad in relation to a ransom, which ransom it does not describe as infinite, but more moderately as reasonable, adequate to the occasion, or what ought to be so. Such an one Chryses brought to Agamemnon for his captive daughter.

In the ancient tongues we find abundant proofs of a belief in predestination having prevailed when they were moulded. Agreeable to this, any space of time is rightly described as commensurate, as it exactly corresponds to what the Almighty has fixed for the duration of such and such things, a man's life for example, or his power and sway ; and, combining the two things, we perceive how a door is opened for applying to a variety of spaces of time, according to what is handled, the very same term that denotes eternity. In this way, what is strictly unlimited and what is strictly limited are designated by one and the same word according to circumstances. Moreover, from being used in the former way it comes also to mean a long time not specified, (as we sometimes call *eternal* what is only long-enduring, or perhaps only incessant or frequently repeated), and from its use to denote particular spaces that vary in length according to

* Applied with a reference to the commensurate, a term does not negative limit absolutely but only relatively to a certain standard. It denies a limit within an understood limit.

the case, it very naturally also comes to mean duration in the abstract, the *zeitdauer* of Passow.

Among the limited times which it denotes in Scripture, the longest by far is what we may call an *aion*, adopting the Greek word itself. When the current *aion* has expired and a new one begun, a point of time unknown but no doubt very far distant by a human standard, the lost are recalled into existence. The word also denotes certain periods or portions of time in the history of the Church, a generation, and very frequently the life-time of the individual. By a further deflection founded on this last import, it signifies life as opposed to death, as is frequently seen in Homer. From this again is deducible a sense not found in Scripture, namely the *marrow*, particularly that of the spine.

Sometimes it expresses *expiration*, expiry, a thing easily accounted for. The idea of *totality* is comprised in the word, whether as applied to unlimited or limited duration. In the former case we have all time, in the latter the whole of a time determined by the Supreme, a whole corresponding to His determination, or simply what is conceived by the mind as a whole made up of parts. The word therefore habitually denoting a *sum*, *totality* or *complement*, in this latter class of applications, it is not surprising that occasionally it signifies *completion*, that completion which takes place when the time is run out. By a change the exact reverse of this, our word *term*, which when drawn from Latin expressed an end or termination, has come to signify the time itself (a *term of years*, for example) as well as its termination, according to the context and circumstances. *Defunctus*, whence our *defunct*, fundamentally means one who has gone through his allotted time, and played his allotted part.

That *expiration* is a meaning of the noun, is ground sufficient for our feeling no surprise at meeting the derivative in the sense of *destructive*, namely, of life. But in fact this readily flows from the fact of the noun signifying life, just as from *caput*, the chief meanings of which were the *head, life, a beginning*, the Latins derived *capitalis*, the chief meanings of which were *relating to the head, capital, mortal, deadly*. This is the origin of our expression *capital punishment*. In like manner *guilty of a mortal sin* is the right translation in Mark iii. 29, one of the texts relative to the offence of slandering the Holy Ghost. Here for *κρίσεως*, (*criseōs*) condemnation, the Vatican and various other manuscripts read *ἁμαρτήματος* (*hamartematos*), sin. To what we find in the authorised version, *in danger of eternal damnation*, there is further this insuperable objection that, though *ἐνοχος* (*enochos*) followed by the dative means *liable or exposed to*, with the genitive, as here, it means *guilty of*.

As the noun is used to denote an era, age, generation, or period of time in the history of the Church, a space more or less extensive according to the case, it passes on to denote the people of that time, or those whose power or sentiments prevail in it. In this sense the authorised version commonly renders it by *world*; but sometimes it is better to use *age*, which is familiar to us in both senses. When a man is said to have advanced far beyond his age, we understand it to mean far beyond the people of his age. And, just as *κτίσις*, (*ctisis*), denotes either *the creation, those created, or creation*, as an act or fact, so the noun we are considering passes on from meaning *world, intelligent creation*, to denote the act or fact of putting into being, a sense, however, also connected with that of *life*.

From this last meaning in the noun comes that of *life-long, for life*, in its derivative; and analogously from *age, time*, and the like, we have *of or belonging to the age or time, for the time being*, and so on. It is a curious circumstance, and one that should be a warning to those so anxious to force on the words we are considering, in the New Testament indiscriminately, the strongest possible sense as to duration, that *æi*, (*aei*), the common word for *always*, is found in the sense of *for the time being*. At Athens, *ὁ æi ἀρχων*, *ho æi archon*, did not mean one always archon, or one repeatedly named to that office, but simply the archon for the time being.

In the current version the verse we are upon, Matt. xxv. 46, is rendered as follows:—"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." Here I replace *everlasting punishment* by *life-long punishment*.* For a reason to be given, it is not allowable here to assign to *αἰωνιον* the same meaning in both places.

Some people are so much of the contrary opinion as to maintain that of necessity the word must have the same import in both combinations. Now the Greeks had two terms, *ploce* and *antanaclasis*, for the repetition of the same word, but with a diversity of sense, in the same or an adjoining sentence, and it is not to be supposed that they named, and treated of, a thing that had no existence in their language and literature. In fact we find it in all languages, ancient and modern, particularly the former, and in great variety. It is very common in the Bible. Our English would not be amiss were we to say of an unhappy attempt at criticism, "Some of the remarks betray partial learning, others the partial mind." In this

* He at one time rendered it "destructive punishment."—A.

sentence, the similarity in form between which and the verse under consideration is evident, *partial* has two meanings, being in one combination opposed to *complete*, in the other to *unbiassed*. In the last chapter of Romans, verses 25 and 26, we find in one sentence the very adjective we are considering in two combinations and two senses. In the current version *χρονους αιωνιους* is rendered *since the world began*, and *του αιωνιου Θεου*, *of the everlasting God*, nor has any one ever maintained that the word bears the same meaning in the two places.

When two or more things are spoken of to which the same quality applies, it is the rule in all languages to express the adjective but once, though exceptions are admitted with a view to perspicuity or æsthetic effect. As to the latter plea, were there here an anadiplosis, a repetition for effect, the word repeated would obtain an emphatic place, at any rate in one of its combinations. Instead of this it holds in both of them the position of an unemphatic epithet, being after the noun, not before it. In reference to the other plea, that of perspicuity, a simple experiment will shew that it cannot be adduced. If we strike out the first *αιωνιον* and put a comma before the second, the verse will read as follows, *Και απελευσονται, ουτοι εις κολασιν οι δε δικαιοι εις ζωην, αιωνιον*, "And they shall depart, these into punishment and the righteous into life, to eternity." Did we find the text conformable to the above there would be no more difficulty in connecting *αιωνιον* with each of the nouns here than in 1 Tim. vi. 16. Perspicuity then has no concern in the repetition, from which repetition we perceive that the meanings are two.

For fourteen years and a half I have been in the habit of giving formal challenges to classical scholars (some of

them first-rate men) in reference to the point we are upon. I have called upon them to produce from a Greek writer, if they can, an instance of an adjective being repeated in the same sense in two combinations with nouns, an instance at least in which we cannot trace the influence of a regard to perspicuity or to effect. As yet nothing of this nature has been brought forward, which by some of the parties had been eagerly done, had it been in their power.

According to the old remark a man is not bound to prove a negative. I deny that repetition of an adjective in the same sense, as above, is allowed by Greek practice. If a man hold the affirmative, let him produce an instance, which will then be examined.

Whether bliss is to be endless or not is a question too momentous not to make a measure of anxiety pardonable; but there is a rational and morally correct way of proceeding in order to remove doubts and fortify hope on this subject, and there is a way of proceeding which is neither rational nor blameless. It must be confessed, that the difficulty of fixing the exact force of terms is much beyond the common in the case of the words we are considering, above all when we have to choose between two meanings that, as seen in all tongues, so readily slide into one another as *long-enduring* and *eternal*. But this slipperiness of the terms only shews in a stronger light the injudiciousness of making them our starting point. It will probably be found that they are determinable in every single place; but in order to this we must take into view the nature of things and the statements of Scripture elsewhere. From the two things named, then, is derived whatever strength, in virtue of a well-considered interpretation, resides in certain texts

containing the ambiguous, but determinable, terms in question. To those sources, accordingly, should private Christians and teachers turn their attention, and cease to lay the stress they are so apt to do on texts containing the words *eternal* and the like, the validity of which can be only derivative. In this manner they will get rid of a temptation to disingenuousness, and occupy their minds with the noblest considerations and highest truths.

With regard to the nature of things, the question mostly resolves itself into this, Is it to be inferred, or not, from the attributes of the Deity as made known to us by reason and Scripture, that endless bliss is among the things He intends to bestow? According to some He will bestow it on all in the end, according to others it is to be the lot only of a portion; but all believers in revelation agree in the fact that it forms part of His designs, and in the present age there cannot be many that would dispute our being able to infer as much from His attributes, a point, therefore, which there is no occasion to labour. A wise and steady man, when he has brought a thing, a farm for example, to the best condition it admits of, thenceforward maintains it in that condition; and it may be presumed that the Supreme Being does the like. The benevolence which prompted Him to confer good, still subsists, and will prompt Him to uphold it. In the course of preparation there may be many a change and downfall; but a Being so wise must have ends in which to rest, and intend a state of things as unchangeable as His own nature.

Nor does any one deny that endless bliss is attested by numerous texts in which neither of the debatable words occurs. We have a direct testimony in some, as [Blank here never filled up.]

The same conclusion is arrived at by combining the immortality of Christ with what is said of His having a body, that is of persons. As one with Him, these must needs be immortal. We do indeed gather from 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25, that in one sense His reign will cease; but we are also told, Luke xxxii. 33, of a reign of His of which there shall be no end, which implies that there are everlastingly blessed souls whose head He is.

In the abstract, every one professes to believe that a single clear scriptural warrant is enough to establish any point, but this principle is too apt to evaporate in the concrete. Not only on the subject we have just been upon but many others, it is easy to perceive in expounders an anxiety to multiply proofs when there is proof quite sufficient already. It is partly from this cause that a great variety of things revealed in the New Testament have been shrouded, the texts that relate to them having been forced, without the smallest necessity, into the service of truths currently believed.

We now proceed to the Apocalypse, where certain combinations of *αἰών* (*aiōn*) with itself are rendered *for ever and ever* in the authorised version. In the *Textus receptus* the passages are fourteen in number; but in chap. v. 14, the words in question are wholly spurious, and in i. 6, the more probable reading is simply *εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας* (*eis tous aiōnas*), here translatable *to eternity*. If, however, we were uniformly to go by the *Receptus*, it would make no difference to the argument. These emendations leave us twelve places to be considered, in one of which, xiv. 11, the reading is *εἰς αἰῶνας αἰῶνων* (*eis aiōnas aiōnōn*), while in the remaining eleven it is *εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων* (*eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn*). These eleven places are i. 18; iv. 9, 10; v. 13; vii. 12;

x. 6; xi. 15; xv. 7; xix. 3; xx. 10; xxii. 5. Now in two of these, namely xix. 3, and xx. 10, as also in xiv. 11, before mentioned, it is not correct to render in a way expressive of endless duration.

With regard to the others, the best way of rendering them is to found on an idiom, universally acknowledged to be common in the New Testament, whereby the genitive performs the part of an adjective. In the current version we have the words *glorious liberty* in Rom. viii. 21, but it would have been *liberty of glory* had the mere form of the original been servilely copied. At 1 Tim. i. 17, we read, *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, &c.* where the first epithet represents the very genitive, *τῶν αἰώνων* (*ton aiōnōn*), with which we are now concerned. In this place it refers to the past and denies all beginning, while the next word denies all end; but of course, as the noun equally, and indeed more commonly, refers to the future, its genitive plural is perfectly adapted to mean *endless*. Hence, in the division of texts in question, *εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων* (*eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn*), is to be translated *for the endless aions*, or, with more precision, *for the endless successions of aions*.* Different from *for ever and ever*, which simply denotes eternity in an emphatic way, this denotes an eternity full of activity, for an *aion* is a measure of time wherein certain things are transacted. It refers to a most sublime and animating truth, one frequently touched on in Scripture, that God will never cease to create fresh creatures whom to beatify.

Of the three exceptional passages, xx. 10 is the simplest. By the words *καὶ βασανισθήσονται ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων* (*cai basanisthesontai*

* "Countless aions" best. See 1 Pet. iv. 11.

hemeras cai nyctos eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn), is meant and they shall be tormented day and night for the spaces of their lives, or, in better English, *for their respective lives*. If this be correct, eternal woe is not the lot even of offenders such as the post-millennial Beast and false prophet and Satan himself.

To the two remaining passages a few philological remarks may be premised. 1. When the emblematic senses of *fire* come to be considered, it will be shewn that *smoke* is symbolically used for *end, termination, extinction*. 2. One of the acknowledged senses of ἀναβαίω, (*anabaino*), is *eventire*, to take place. 3. It is well known that, among the uses of the Greek perfect, one is to express the paulo-post future, what is about to take place, what would immediately or soon happen on a given supposition. Occasionally it relates to the past with a paulo-post force, of which we have an instance in Matthiä, p. 1126. Agreeable to this idiom, εἶρηκαν in Rev. xix. 3, is translateable *they soon said*. 4. It is well known that the Hebrew word corresponding to our *and* has a great variety of meanings. This is equally true of the Greek καί (*cai*), but Greek lexicography has not yet come up to that of Hebrew in the exhibition of this diversity, a diversity, be it remarked, our surprise at which will cease when we have made adequate research into the state of the case in relation to our little word *and* in old English, and what holds in many other languages.

In the two verses to which we now proceed, καί appears as *but, for, though, on the other hand*, senses which practised scholars will have met with.

There is no dispute about the reading of the original in the two places now to be translated. The first, xiv.

11, runs thus: *Though the termination of their torment taketh place as lives expire, on the other hand there is no relief, night nor day, for those that worship the beast or his image, or any that receive the mark of his name.* With regard to the other passage, xix. 3, the seer tells us in the two verses preceding that he heard a loud alleluia because of God having avenged His people on the great harlot. He then proceeds, *But they soon said alleluia for a second (different) reason, for her extinction taketh place as lives expire.*

It is evident that the combinations of the original which, were we to follow its exact form, would be Englished by *at the conclusions of lives*, are equivalent to our expression *as lives expire*. In reference to the second passage, *the great harlot* is simply a personification of the hostile and persecuting system which in those days will bear sway for a time, and a designation of those who adhere to it and oppress Christians. Vengeance finally overtaking them in this life, and this vengeance wearing out and extinguishing the natural life and that of the soul simultaneously, the death of each individual makes for the extinction of the harlot, who is extinct when the whole number are dead.

In the authorised version the above verse is thus given: *And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.* It is usual for Eternists to maintain that the glorified saints, as holy and hating all unholiness, will feel complacency in the eternal woe of the condemned. If the new translation be correct, their feelings are very different from this. At first they are overjoyed that vengeance has overtaken those who have been corrupting and oppressing; but subsequently they

relent; and when the guilty have found repose in death there is a new halleluia from the saints.

From a very early period it appears to have been thought that fundamentally the formula we are considering means *for ages of ages*, whence the *in secula seculorum* of the Vulgate, which is copied by the French and Italian translation. Many among ourselves have given in to the expression, the objection to which is that time has but one dimension and cannot be multiplied into itself. Millions of ages is intelligible and correct; centuries of ages we may understand by taking *centuries* to mean *hundreds*; but ages of ages is an absurd expression, which we cannot suppose to have found admittance into Scripture.

It is reasonable to think that from this interpretation originated the tenet combined with Destructionism of old, that the punishment of the wicked is very protracted, for, supposing *ages of ages* intelligible at all, it must mean a very long time. It was therefore supposed that by this vague formula eternity was meant in some texts and long endurance in others. Afterwards they were held all to mean eternity; in other words Eternism succeeded, first partially, then generally, to Destructionism. Among the causes of its progress may be mentioned the misery and wickedness of the times. In evil days men find it more difficult to hold fast just conceptions of the Divine goodness; and the more enormous the wickedness we witness, the more apt are we to lose the balance of our minds, and anticipate for it a merciless doom hereafter.

It is admitted without reserve that there is a class of texts on which, as against the Correctionists, the victory is clearly on the Eternist side. They prove from Scrip-

ture that a man who leaves this world unconverted has not to expect in the next conversion and reception into favour. This is equally maintained by the Destructionists. On the other hand, the Eternists have no good reply to make to the Correctionists when these urge on them the Divine attributes, or appeal to texts which speak of the salvation of all. As the Eternists by one battery fairly demolish Correctionism, so do two batteries of the Correctionists, severally and still more jointly, fairly demolish Eternism. No system is safe from attack but that which combines destruction and redivival.

Fire.—It is true, there are passages of Scripture, (for instance the account of the burning bush in the third of Exodus, and the directions given in the sixth of Leviticus about the fire on the altar) in which the idea of perpetuity is connected with fire. But though we should suppose, as perhaps we commonly may, that the perpetuity alluded to is the completest of all, namely eternity, this yields no support to the supposition that misery ever is, or can be, eternal. In such passages fire is always viewed under a pleasing aspect, and either denotes love, or the life and well-being created by its action. This association of ideas is abundantly traceable in the metaphorical diction of perhaps all mankind. In Latin, if *ignis* signifies *wrath*, it also signifies *love*. The families to which belong *fire* and *warmth* are used in both senses in English, in which they also occur in relation to *zeal* and whatever indicates fervency of life, animation. Pages might be filled with such facts of language; and when we turn to nature and human life it is the same. For comfort we must have the use of domestic fire, even in the warmest climates. The same element, in its latent and sensible states, is found in universal nature, and is

everywhere operative, whether to keep things as they are or to bring about changes and circulations, maintain life or effect growth. It is hardly hyperbolical to say that the devastation wrought by this element in the world is as nothing to the benefits it produces; and it deserves especial notice that as beneficial it exhibits stability and permanence, while as destructive it is suicidal and of short endurance. A conflagration, let it make ever so great a noise in the world for its ravages, comes to an end for want of fuel; but, to take a single example, century after century has the advantage of the noiseless, only lately discovered, latent heat that upholds the liquidating of water and the gaseous properties of the atmosphere.

Among the elements fire is the only one that exhibits itself as a conqueror in the highest sense, a power able to assimilate. Earth, for example, does not beget earth, but fire begets fire. All the fires that now burn in this island, yielding us warmth and other comforts innumerable, descend, with exceptions not worth notice, from one or a few kindlings that were brought over sea of old. Now when, with a fast hold of first principles, we turn our mind's eye from the world of pictures to the world of things pictured, we must be sensible that the element of a nature to conquer will also be of a nature to keep. For the manifold purposes of a creation teeming with life it is necessary that a balance and a circulation be kept up, and that the results of fire be confined within bounds. It is enough for our instruction that its assimilating character is fully displayed, and that under conditions which combine this idea with those of design, wisdom and goodness, and the benefits resulting. For one instance of man being injured by this quality of fire,

as in a conflagration, there are a myriad of its operating to his benefit, under the guidance of the reason and foresight he has been endowed with.

From this, in the way of analogy, we may draw an inference respecting the power that, in the general administration of things, conquers and keeps, that is respecting the disposition associated with it. Something may also be inferred from the respective natures and natural working of the three imaginable dispositions. Indifference is inert, hatred suicidal, love is the sole conqueror, at least in the end. But what puts the thing beyond all doubt is the information given us by reason, and abundantly corroborated by Scripture, concerning Him who describes himself as the sole Power in the universe, concerning the ancient blazing fire, that fire which has been burning from all antiquity and will burn to all eternity. God is love.

In illustration of the emblem discoursed of, it is not necessary in this place to dwell on the love of the Creator to the creature, as such, a favourable regard which, though its action may be suspended or even replaced by wrath, is as durable as the Creator himself, and ever appears in the final results. Concerning those already His people Scripture invariably teaches two things: that His dateless love to them is now in action and will not expire, and that the love to Himself, the life or fire He has implanted in them, He will also maintain to the end. A perpetual fire is a fit emblem of the Supreme himself, of the two indefectible things just mentioned, of the eternal well-being of the saints, and above all of the glorified creation, or any member of it. Either is well figured by a burning bush in the midst of which is the Supreme Being, who in upholding neces-

sarily creates, to all eternity, and not only creates but restores. The bush really burns, (created existence is interstitial, therefore in one sense ever vanishing.)

Fire is acknowledged to figure what purifies, a use of the term mostly connected with its designating life, as also conquest or reduction. In nature animal life is attended with a warmth which preserves the system from putrefaction; and the smelter avails himself of heat to reduce metallic oxydes into metals and separate all extraneous matter. In the kingdom of grace, affliction by sickness or otherwise is a frequent precursor of the reception of Divine truth; and the saints are purified by the fire of more or less correction in this life, which is a case of reduction, for the ignobler principles are thereby more thoroughly reduced under the nobler. When we apply fire, as most commonly happens, to bodies whose contents are not wholly combustible, part is volatilised or sublimated and another part remains as ashes. In like manner the fire of persecution, or seduction, or both, applied to a mixed mass of professors, *tries* them and brings to light what is at the bottom of each man. This sense is posterior to that of purifying. The mixed mass is as it were a matrix or ore which requires to be purified by the separation of the unsound from the sound. These are illustrations of a nature to strike; but the principal thing after all, in the considerate view of the understanding, is the action of Divine grace as implanted and upheld to the end in all the children of God. It is not only a purifier as in the mean time partly subduing sin, but a pledge of entire purity hereafter, as a foundation for which it is a pledge of life. Those possessed of it survive, while the others are lost.

Hence, very naturally, *smoke* comes to signify termina-

tion, end, extinction in the symbolical language of Scripture and the East. In Isa. li. 6, for example, we read, "*The heavens shall vanish away like smoke;*" and in a well-known ode Hafiz says, in the person of a persecuted saint, and in allusion to one of those crises spoken of in prophecy, *The miserable end (literally smoke) of those to blame for my sorrows, will consume the earthly, spiritless and unstaunch*, which amounts to this, that when destruction shall overtake the oppressor who subdues the religious constancy of others, those that yield will equally be overtaken. The vanishing of smoke in the air is a familiar phenomenon. We shall probably find in all languages some use of the term to denote what is perishable, imaginary, or deceptive. The *fumum vendere* of the Latins is well known. When a thing ends in nothing, it is said in English to end in smoke.

The parallel thing in the kingdom of grace is soon pointed out. The entire race of Adam is to be considered as so much fuel, all of it in its own nature combustible, but not all of it actually ignited. More especially, when we direct our attention to an age and country wherein Divine truth makes conquests, we find that it does not subdue all. Some are ignited, that is converted, but others are not; and these last are represented by that part of the fuel which mounts into the air, where it vanishes. We may be reminded that nevertheless it is not destroyed, and that any part which may come to hand is combustible as before. These things are true, and probably significant. They may have some force, in subordination to more cogent arguments, to prove that there is redivival as well as destruction, though later in the day; but in the meantime the vanishing of smoke is an emblem before our eyes that points to the

latter. We may also be reminded that the ignited part vanishes yet more completely. It does, but precisely for this reason it is significant of life. Life hereafter is not given except when it is intended as a substratum not only for purity (which is simply negative) but for love, and not only for love but for its monopoly of the will. In the people of God, the flesh, including its affections as well as excesses, is already crucified, Gal. v. 24, and is dying a lingering death. This eventual death of selfal propension, and full dominion of love, is a conquest, an assimilation, and a species of absorption, effected by that love on God's part which works all. It is not surprising that one of the Hebrew verbs signifying *to burn*, *saraf*, radically means to absorb; for fire, whether earthly or heavenly, is an absorber.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE INTERVAL—SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE OF OMNISM—
SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY — OBSTACLES TO CHRIS-
TIANISATION.

I MUST beg my readers with me to pass over in imagination two years in the life of Frederic and Elizabeth. Much of deep interest there doubtless was to mark the outer and inner history of these our friends, and the other persons with whom we have been holding converse during this space of time; but of all this only slight and scanty records are available. In the spring succeeding that of his marriage, Frederic carried out his project of revisiting the Continent, this time, of course, accompanied by Elizabeth. They were between four and five months absent, dividing the time chiefly between France and Germany. The summer of the following year Mr and Mrs Merton came to visit them at Ashburn, accompanied by Sophia Milwood; and by the letters which afterwards passed between the friends, from some of which I shall extract passages for my readers, before bringing this volume to a close, it plainly transpires that all three had become converts to Redivivalism. It also appears that Frederic—with whom the ancient characteristic remained in full force after his marriage as before, of forming enthusiastic friendships with the ardent and the worthy of his own sex—had conceived a strong affection for a young dissenting minister whom he met with

abroad—a Scotchman of the name of Bruce—had sought to indoctrinate him with his own views, and had made a considerable impression on his mind. I shall copy almost entire two long letters addressed to him by Frederic, and also parts of some written to another young man, a clergyman of the Church of Scotland, of the name of Graham, whose acquaintance he made about the same time. To judge from their letters, extracts from which might have interested my readers, had my space permitted their insertion, both these young men were pious and interesting, though very different in disposition and cast of mind, what was chiefly to be combated being a certain tendency in the one case to scepticism, and in the other to over-timidity.

There are two queries of lively interest which some of my readers will desire to have answered, but touching which, unhappily, I am unable to satisfy them. The one is whether Frederic and Elizabeth were so happy as to bring over those nearest and dearest to them on either side to their own belief; the other whether Elizabeth's fears were realised as to suspicions or aspersions cast on her husband from his avowal of *Pantist* as well as *Omnist* doctrines, and as to *heart-griefs* brought on himself or on her in consequence.

Frederic to Mr Graham.

“Your disposition to embrace redivivalist views is evidently much checked at present by the dread of the moral effects of Omnism both on the saint and the sinner. You fear that, if thoroughly adopted by yourself, it could not but diminish your zeal for the salvation of the unconverted, while, if believed by them, it must encourage them to sin. I think your fears on both these points

are groundless, and shall devote this letter to the endeavour to remove them.

"No one, I think, can, after examining Calvinistic Universalism, assert that it *directly* panders to any unholy principle. The practical tendency of Universalism, as respects the child of God, is salutary and pleasing. To use Winchester's words, 'If this doctrine does not tend to produce selfishness, envy, pride or wrath, but, on the contrary, causes benevolence, meekness, humility, forbearance, forgiveness, charity, and all goodness to abound and increase, it cannot be a licentious doctrine.' It has been supposed unfriendly to zeal, but I do not think experience will confirm the suspicion.

"I will take your difficulties, however, in the order in which you stated them. Supposing your first difficulty to imply (which, however, I hope it does not) that, on Universalist principles, a warm earnest zeal for the salvation of men is not appropriate, as all are sure to be happy at last, I am tempted to draw my reply from a manuscript sermon by that noble prisoner Lennox, whom I told you of, which sermon was given me by my friend Mr Lloyd. Alluding to an objection similar to yours brought against Universalism, he says, 'Can *you* say this, O Christian man, who were brought to God in early youth? Then say no more of gratitude to Him for having so soon caused you to hear His voice, called you into the fold, and led you to obey it. Be silent henceforth as to your delight in consecrating your vigorous years and unworn sensibilities to His service. Your gratitude, your rejoicing on your own account, is foolish mockery, or contemptible selfishness, if you regard it as a matter of indifference, *when* your fellow-men shall come to participate in your privileges. Can *you* say this, O

dying Christian, who after years of obstinate rebellion have been at the eleventh hour subdued into love? Stop, then, your sorrowful regrets at your past obstinacy and ingratitude. Desire no more that you had earlier obeyed your God, and tasted of His proffered love. Your regrets, your remorse, are absurd, or worse than absurd, if you think it a matter of such small importance whether countless millions of your fellow-men are to be holy and happy at once, or only made so after enduring a wrath terrible as we describe it, followed perhaps by a long period of banishment from the favour of God.'

"But the objection may be otherwise interpreted, in a subjective not objective sense. 'If we who believe the wrath to descend upon the wicked is to be eternal in its duration, are yet so indolent and lukewarm in our efforts to save them, how is it possible but that those who imagine that that wrath will be succeeded by favour should be colder still and more inactive?' The converted man has two distinct sets of principles—those springing from his old nature, which may be termed the *anthropic*, and those springing from his new nature, which we may designate the *epanthropic*. The same act may, at different times, proceed from either of these sources. In regard to that zeal for human salvation which is of the latter description, being pure and beautiful, and of the Holy Ghost's production, it must ever be pleasing in the sight of God. But it is not His will that in this state of imperfection it should ever reach a *degree* at all commensurate with the great objective facts fitted to call it forth, whether these be viewed as Eternism or as Universalism represents them. As to the amount of this heavenly grace which the Holy Ghost may see fit to bestow in particular circumstances, it is a

matter which transcends our speculations as well as our control.

“Concerning that zeal which is of anthropic origin, we do not always find its relative intensity and steadiness to accord with the acknowledged importance of the objects on which it bears. If it did so, would it not invariably happen, that those who sincerely believe in the solemn judgment awaiting impenitent sinners, should enter with far greater interest and activity into any scheme promotive of the salvation of men’s souls, than one that aimed at the supply of their temporal wants or the relief of their physical ailments? So far is this, however, from being the case, that the reverse often holds good. The less importance of the one class of appeal is made up for by its greater definiteness and nearness; for, as a general rule, I think we shall find that, while the infinite forms a solemnising, if not overwhelming subject of contemplation, it is the definite, and above all the palpable, or that which approaches the nearest to it, which furnishes the surest, most energising and constant principle of action. What may still better, perhaps, account for the greater proportionate activity in benevolent enterprises which end with this life, is the more *telling* results, as a general experience, consequent on such efforts. Were there more prayer, greater dependence on God, and greater singleness of heart, mingled with our exertions for the spiritual good of others, there can be no doubt that our success would be greater. As it is, there is often a degree of hopelessness accompanying them which cannot but cause zeal to languish. Now, while without the influences of the Spirit, no system of doctrine can avail to save men, and these have been

vouchsafed to bless teaching with which much error was blended, it is certainly accordant both with our feelings of propriety and our knowledge of the character of God, to suppose that, if any doctrine were preached with *more* of Divine truth in it, its success in impressing men would also be greater. Neither should we leave out of account the greater harmony there might exist between such views and that part of the actual constitution of man which, fallen though he be, the mind can dwell on with a measure of complacency, his desire of eventual happiness, the interest he feels in the lot of his fellow-men, his sense of justice, his moral feelings generally. A system of doctrine, therefore, which, from a combination of the above-named causes, should be found, when adequately tried, to be more productive of spiritual fruit than opposing systems, would thus—independent of its more direct influence arising from greater suitableness to the loving hearts of the advocates themselves—be likely to excite a warmer and a more constant zeal. In all this we have been considering zealous desire and effort in their direct bearing on the welfare of man. If we view it in its other aspect of delight in the happiness of God, it is clear that any doctrine which tends to a greater complacent love for Him, must be friendly to zeal. In connexion with this I refer you again to Wurtemberg. With respect to the Christian graces generally, we must remember that not only is it the exhibition of mercy and not of wrath that at first changes the heart, but it is by means of love that the process of sanctification is carried on—love on the part of God begetting ever a fresh love in us in return; and love, we know, has an expelling power which banishes all that is contrary to it from the

heart. If we turn to consider the effects of the doctrine on the unregenerate, much of what I have said will, I think, come out still more clearly."

Frederic to Mr Bruce.

"MY DEAR MR BRUCE,— . . . You say you feel that you have almost unconsciously contracted a disgust for systematic theology; that when you are not engaged in the action of life, which you desire ever to enter on in a religious spirit, you are inclined to turn from the intellectual arena altogether, and lie down contented on the green sward of religious feeling and principle. I must confess that this state of your mind causes in me sincere regret. As for the action, strictly so called, we will leave that alone, taking for granted that we are at one, as in essentials we probably are, in that region. But I would ask you, if the course you in other respects feel disposed to follow is a manly one, and yours the proper mode of treating God's truth. Turn to other departments of inquiry—to science, for instance—what would you think of the geological teacher who should say, 'There are so many contending theories in this science, and such difficulty in resting in any, that I shall not trouble myself or my pupils with the endeavour to estimate their various merits; I shall speak of beautiful nature alone, and her hidden deep affinities with our inner being'? I know not what would be your reply; but mine would be this: I do not say that this man is turning from the true to the untrue, or even from the true to the fanciful. It is no fancy, but a truth, whose certainty can be *felt* though it cannot be demonstrated, that there are innumerable, most subtle, yet powerful links between the outer and the inner world. This

region of deep reality, and that of sentiment generally, is essentially the poet's world; but I would by no means exclude from it the secularly scientific, far less the religious teacher. But if either of these dwell exclusively in this realm, and treat with contempt that of positive objective truth, he clearly is laying *himself* open to contempt. I am the more anxious to write on this subject, my dear friend, that I regard you as very far from singular in your present feelings. I believe that similar ones are, to a large extent, leavening the religious community. I mourn over this state of things, and, mourning, would wish to give my quota of help towards remedying the evil. I know well that this is not to be done by scolding. Scolding is generally a blind thing, or a blinding one. If it does not proceed from deficient sympathy, it produces it. It is also little efficacious: the angry man will tear off the twigs of the plant which offends him, but he will not patiently dig to the root of the evil, and thus succeed in uprooting it. At the same time, allow me to remark (altogether by the way), that there are times when impatient and impetuous indignation is completely in place, when a thing is root and branch such an intruder in God's world, that to treat it summarily is the only right method. Not so, however, is it with this growing disinclination towards dogmatic theology. I see it springing up in some of the most tender-conscienced, most beautiful natures. I would speak gently of it, but I would not indulge it. The best remedy I can see for it is a deeper infusion of the manly love of *truth*, as a balance to the more feminine love of *beauty*. It is God's truth, not man's, however, of which we now speak; and, as it is God's, it must be found in the end to harmonise with true beauty. Yet

should we seek it, love it, long for it, not because it is beautiful, but because it is true. You who know my peculiar sentiments on one particular doctrinal point, and are aware of my strong conviction that *there* dogmatic theology has departed alike from beauty and from truth, will understand how I must sympathise with those who, looking on dogmatic theology as the representative of Divine truth, have felt, though they would not acknowledge it to themselves, as if here truth and beauty were at variance. And did they stop there, my sympathy with the class would be strong; but when they go on to regard with indifference, if not scorn, doctrines which are the very life and kernel of Christianity, those of original sin, the necessity of the new birth, justification by faith, substitutionary atonement, election, and free grace—matters which concern God's means, and not His ends—matters clearly taught in the revelation they profess to believe from God, and which *systematic theology*, in the writings of such men as Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and Edwards, clearly taught and triumphantly vindicated—then my sympathy forsakes them quite. One consideration alone can in part recall it: it is this, that as man is constituted, he will ever be prone, as the saying is, to throw away the good fish with the bad. Finding the frightful doctrine of eternal misery so mixed up with the explicit gospel scheme, and revolting from the former, many are led to reject the scheme which it vitiated. Hence my zeal for Redivivalism is not *altogether* on its own account: I look on it as the great reconciler in the minds of a vast number to the blessed scheme of saving truth.

“That Christianity, even as a system of doctrinal belief (and this is the aspect in which we are now exclusively

considering it), is at present combated by strong forces both in the East and West, is what no reflective man can fail to see. Let us first turn to the East, and especially to India, where our political sway is so vast, and our responsibility in consequence so great. Leaving for the present those questions of difficult determination and bearing, *where* religion proper ends and morality begins, at what point non-interference, ceasing to be a necessary homage to conscience, assumes the positive character of encouragement of evil—questions bearing on our duties as rulers, and concerning ourselves only with our responsibility as holders of truth, there are three main considerations which should serve, I think, to keep us from inaction. 1. That truth of any kind should not be held in monopoly: it belongs to the race. 2. That if we are in any true sense Christians, we must hold that the reception of Christianity into the heart, preparatory to which is its adoption by the understanding, would be a boon to every individual of the human family. 3. That we have the express command of our Lord himself to go and preach the gospel to every creature. I believe, therefore, that we are called on to evangelise the East. I believe, too, that in the end we shall succeed in doing so; but I wish, in the present connexion, to refer briefly to the special obstacles in the way. First, among the vulgar two may be mentioned as pre-eminent. The foolish, licentious, and in every way degraded notions with which their own religions have filled their minds; and a captious, hair-splitting ingenuity in discovering flaws in their teachers' instructions. Now with respect to this second obstacle, I must say that, while it is certainly undesirable to encourage a tendency which, carried to that extreme, is inimical to truth, still it is one

which cannot and ought not to be silenced altogether. Our missionaries in India, who often have been truly choice men, appear to me generally to have hit upon the proper medium in this particular; but if they held a scheme of doctrine which could commend itself more entirely to the reason and conscience of men—faculties which are never obliterated—they would stand at an immensely greater advantage. But it is in dealing with the genuine philosophers of the East, and especially with the noble and truly devout Soofees, who have flung aside the absurdities and the abominations of the vulgar, that the gain would be invaluable. To these men who cling to the most exalted notions of the Supreme Being, and of His designs, handed down to them from old Noahic traditions, it must have been a terrible obstacle in the way of the reception of Christianity, to find it associated with such a doctrine as that of eternal torments, and very doubtful, if not utterly false, notions respecting the power of the Deity over the wills of men. What a glorious change would it be that should bring them missionaries, presenting to them Jesus as the one perfect Mediator chosen by God, and an infallible written revelation far richer than their oral ones, with their own two cherished and honoured doctrines of Pantism and Omnism—the *Ny! Ny!* of which their poets so enraptured sing.

“Let us now turn to the West. First, I must beg not to be understood to deny or undervalue the happy and healthful influences of our time, which in many respects distinguish it favourably from any that have preceded it. Stagnation and stupidity are in no department of life the order of our day; the old deadness of interest in respect to religion which once prevailed even amongst the educated classes, is now happily receding

into the past; and in animation alike of feeling and action, evangelical Christianity is beginning, I trust, to respond to the spirit of the age. But I have not undertaken to speak of the permanent and innate power of Christianity and its continued triumphs, but rather of its accidental impediments. The aspect presented by the modern European mind in relation to Christianity is very different from that we have beheld in Asia. Instead of passion and misguided imagination, reason and conscience bear here, generally and increasingly, the sway in matters of belief, if not always in those of practice. This is a circumstance much to be rejoiced in for its own sake, and also for the high and profound sanction which it affords to the general scheme of Christianity; but, on the other hand, it cannot be overlooked, that, for reasons to which I have already alluded, it tends, in a measure, to a deeply-to-be-regretted result—the weakening of the hold on men's minds of systematic theology, and, along with it, of that living scheme of which systematic theology has been the clumsy, perhaps, and sometimes well-nigh suffocating, but still for the most part the secure depository.

“Genuine Christianity has gained little from that other prominent and characteristic tendency of the age—the cleaving to human tradition in matters of belief, and undue appreciation of forms which man has sanctioned. Such a tendency must not only prevent the growth of truth, but cause it to dwindle, as men do in second childhood. It is true that there is a considerable culture of the ethics of Christianity, and much beautiful result; but, while the inferior metal may be thus purified and elaborated, there needs another element for the production or elaboration of the superior.

"These several tendencies have this in common, that they impair submission to, and enlightenment by, the written Word of God. In the one case, it is the external authority of human tradition; in the other, it is the internal authority of the human faculties which form the ultimate standard of belief: in neither case is it revelation itself. Setting aside that portion of each of our churches which is its salt, preserving it from corruption, there is not one in which the disastrous tendency is not largely manifested to bring down the written revelation towards the level of natural religion. This is clearly exhibited in what has been denominated the Coleridgean school in our English establishment, and as much so in the Negative Theology school, unhappily, I fear, becoming popular amongst our dissenters. The gospel presented by these systems I can only designate a pseudo and parasitical gospel. A pseudo-gospel; for while it retains the name, it has parted with all the vital characteristics. A parasitical gospel; for while in itself a weak and worthless thing, it obtains a deceptive life and vigour by means of the true system on which it preys.* Turning to Scotland—on the whole, I think the picture there more refreshing than anywhere else in Christendom, if we except the few but bright spots of beauty presented by the genuine Protestant Christians of France, who are allowed, on all hands, to be remarkable for their singleness of heart, and the clearness and tenacity of their belief in gospel truth. It is cheering to see that with you not only has cold and torpid moderatism so largely given place to an earnest evangelism, but that that evangelism is to such an

* Frederic, though writing thus strongly of the views themselves, felt, as plainly shewn on other occasions, a truly loving candour towards *individuals* misled by them.

extent manly and entire. But very much to my point is the rise and spread of Morisonianism—a system of doctrine in itself full of insidious and deadly error, although—as existing in many sincere and earnestly pious and loving hearts—it may be the only available, and therefore the necessary protest against Calvinistic Eternism. Morisonianism is not to be accused of casting any slight on revelation. The authority of the Spirit in His Word is fully acknowledged; but the no less vital acknowledgment of His power over the heart is virtually withheld, and thus we obtain a practically seminatural religion. Outside, however, of the peculiarities of sects, or of definite religious persuasions, no one who is even slightly acquainted with the professedly Christian world on either side the Tweed, but must be struck with a growing inclination, especially in the thinking men among them, to dilute their conception of the Divine inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures. Things are so explained away, that, when you come to particular facts (by facts, I mean express declarations of whatever kind), this written revelation comes to rank, even in the fundamental point of objective certainty, below the light either of nature within or nature without, instead of its being, as our old divines devoutly believed (and as some of these modern ones still most inconsistently with themselves assert), greater than either, having, besides their inner and outer evidence, a seal of certainty quite peculiar to itself. When the proper inspiration of the Scriptures is given up, it is a very natural result, that they should be made to contain little more than can be known with certainty independently of them. And this result, accordingly, is increasingly visible. The Bible comes to be pretty much a reproduction of natural reli-

gion, with an appendage of what, thus understood, could scarcely fail to be viewed by a correct and unbiassed taste as offensive bombast and pretentious indirectness and obscurity, which its advocates must explain and honour as best they can. The state of things in the West is thus, in certain respects, more unpromising than that in the East. Without direct Divine influence no religious teaching can convert; but it is notable that the special doctrines of Christianity, which are such stumbling-blocks to Occidentals, are not at all so, generally speaking, to Orientals. The incarnation of Christ, vicarious sacrifice and imputed righteousness, election, regeneration, are all doctrines, to a certain extent, in accordance with the Asiatics' preconceived ideas, and, in a far truer sense than is ordinarily supposed in this country, already believed in by them. Above all, philosophers there (such of them, at least, as have not been infected by a scepticism, in many cases derived from European sources), as well as the vulgar, are strongly imbued with the conviction, that revelation, whether oral or written, has a region of its own quite independent of, and superior to, that of natural religion. . . .

"*Tuesday.*—*Apropos* of preaching, my wife and I have been laughing over a dream she had last night, which affords, I think, a tolerable parody of a certain style of pulpit display sometimes met with in this country, especially amongst dissenters. Observe, for the Nonconformist body *generally*—though myself belonging, so far as I belong to *any* religious body, to the Establishment—I have a very high esteem. And as for my wife, not only is she a member of a family on both sides staunchly Nonconformist, from the first rise of the principle in England, but she is herself strongly attached

to it, and earnest in her pride as respects many of its representatives. Now for the dream. There was a religious meeting of some kind, and a dissenting minister opened the proceedings by preparing the audience for an uncommon treat in listening to a Mr Smith (present), who would doubtless give them a highly delightful speech, full of originality and the intensest interest, and adding briefly, and as an altogether subordinate consideration, that it remained with himself and the audience to endeavour to profit from it. As a set-off to these encomiums, the chairman (to Elizabeth's vexation and indignation, as she reasoned in her dream that it was the very way to defeat the end) alluded to certain nervous peculiarities sometimes appearing in the speaker, which he hoped would be set aside on the present occasion. Well, poor Mr Smith now arose; and, having learned what was expected from him, made up his mind that he must be, if nothing else, at any rate very original, and so he certainly was. The point he chose to illustrate was this—the simplicity and *naturalness* of the Scriptures. ‘*There,*’ he said (in the Scriptures), ‘for instance, the little fish appear of the same colour out of the water as they are in it; and if by chance you see them leaping out of the sea, that part of their bodies which is in the water is of the same tint as that which is out of it.’ He then descanted a good deal on the fact, that little fish like to have playthings; and we might see in this one advantage of having little fish in ponds, that they could thus be better supplied with toys; and a good deal more nonsense on this same subject, which, though it threw us both into fits of laughter when awake, was taken in as gospel by Elizabeth at the time, and caused her much surprise.

“Now, think not I would have you regard this even as a parody in the slightest degree applicable to the majority of Nonconformist preachers, amongst whom high talent, as well as ardent piety, is to be found. Still there is a state of things it at least *reminds* me of, which, parodied or unparodied, is ridiculous enough. Young preachers, tired of the good old divinity, tired—must I be forced to say it?—of the simple gospel—a proof that they do not appreciate it; for then they would no more tire of it than a healthy man of his daily bread—look round for novelties. Now the desire of novelty is in itself no evil at all: it is a want of the human heart, and, taking the view which I do of Divine revelation, I think it is intended to supply it. The gospel is one thing, and theology another. The gospel is the soul, but, besides this, there is a body attached and external to it. To drop the figure, as in the kingdom of nature, there has been, along with objective certainty, invariability and completeness from the very beginning, a growth in subjective certainty, and range of discovery, so I believe, if true methods were followed, it would be with revelation and theology. But, missing the gate to this field, many have turned aside to that of fanciful and, in many cases, foolish speculation.

“The sum of what I have to say on this matter is this. Human depravity will, in all ages and countries, present barriers enough, and those pretty similar, to the saving efficacy of the gospel, however presented; and, on the other hand, that gospel has in every age, and from time to time with overwhelming force, overleaped these barriers and blessed the world; yet neither it nor the Christian system of which it forms a part, has had fair play in the East or the West, from the mixture of error

with the truth, and also from the contractedness and finality of doctrinal teaching.

"I fancy you may, at different points of this letter, have been inclined to say that, like all quacks, I hinted my pet doctrine as a panacea for every ill. This is not altogether the case. There are points of difficulty it cannot meet. Yet, speaking generally, is not Truth in reality the remedy, not only for the palpable error to which it is directly opposed, but for the side-and-secondary symptoms to which that error gave rise? I am inclined to think that no error has gained extensive sway amongst men that did not originate in a reaction against some false aspect of previously-exhibited truth. Do not think, however, that I view my own system of theology as perfect. I sincerely believe it superior, in the points I have referred to, to the ordinary schemes; but I dare not presume but that it retains much imperfection.

"My letter has reached such an unconscionable length, that I must not add another line.—Yours faithfully,

"F SOMERS."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE INFINITE.

Frederic to Mr Bruce.

“YOU ask me what I think of Schelling’s views on Liberty and Necessity. A couple of months ago I could not have answered your question, for I had none but the vaguest ideas of his system, which will perhaps surprise you, who are so versed in German philosophy. Even now I have read nothing of his but a short work, entitled, ‘*Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der Menschlichen Freiheit*,’ &c., which I have lately been studying. I shall willingly give you a few of my thoughts on this work, which I fancy contains all that is essential in Schelling’s scheme of Liberty. But, first, let me speak a little of Sir William Hamilton’s ‘*Philosophy of the Unconditioned*,’ and Mr Calderwood’s ‘*Philosophy of the Infinite*,’ which last you rightly characterise as ‘a very able though somewhat captious critique’ on the first. As you have both volumes, I shall be the more concise in my remarks. I would begin by observing, that most who write on these and similar subjects appear to me to do so, either as if the whole matter were perfectly clear to them, or, if they cannot assert this, as if they felt certain it never could be any clearer to another person. Now, I take neither of these grounds. The subject is by no means palpably plain to myself; but I have strong hopes

that, by the candid and earnest application to it of successive minds, it may in the end become far more so than now it is possible for any of us to conceive. I shall contribute my quota towards this result, by giving my sincere convictions on the subject—some of which are derived, others original—but which it is not necessary nor possible I should always thus distinguish. Sir William Hamilton has written on this, as on every subject he undertakes, in a manner full at once of precision and comprehensiveness. Though, from his eminent endowment with these qualifications, he can seldom fail to choose the exactly right term to express his thought, as Mr Calderwood has apparently greatly misunderstood him on some points, I shall make a few remarks as I proceed, in the way of commentary. At page 20 of Mr Calderwood's work, after saying, 'The sense in which Sir William employs the term Absolute, when he distinguishes it as a contradictory of the Infinite, is what is *finished, perfected, completed*; so that the absolute, in this sense, is what is out of relation, &c., as finished, perfect, complete, total,' he states his objections to this distinction. 'If anything be "perfect" or "complete,"' he says, 'the infinite must, for if it were imperfect or incomplete, it could be no longer infinite.' Now, it is difficult for us finite beings to maintain a sure footing when we are treating of infinitude; but if we turn to that illustration of the notion of the infinite with which we are most familiar—that of endless duration—this infinite certainly is not at any given moment perfected or total. If it be objected, that it is involved in the very idea of the perfection of some of the attributes of God that they are absolute, I would ask if we have any warrant in Scripture or reason for supposing that *everything*

connected with the infinite God is infinite. At the same time, there appear to be some things, *e. g.*, the ideas in the eternal mind, whose number is at once perfected and infinite. Therefore, I am not prepared entirely to homologate the distinction instituted by Sir William between the Infinite and the Absolute.

“P. 23. ‘We cannot understand in what sense the Absolute can be called the unconditionally limited.’ Sir William’s thought seems to be, that the Absolute, as distinguished from the Infinite, is unlimitedly (*i.e.*, completely) limited—there is no limit to its limitation (compatible with existence—in fact, that which *is* not, has no limits to be limited)—that limitation is absolute. As an illustration of this distinction, we may take the idea of an ultimate atom, that which is so limited that it cannot be divided into parts. It is clear that this is a perfectly different idea from that of the infinite, such as is furnished by the notion of illimitable space viewed as an objective reality, which is so unlimited that it cannot be considered a part of a greater whole. When Sir William applies to this last also—the unconditionally unlimited—the term Absolute, as when he says, ‘On the one hand, we can positively conceive neither an absolute whole, that is, a whole so great that we cannot conceive it as a relative part of a still greater whole,’ &c., does he not there use the word—as he said he should find it unavoidable sometimes to do—in a wider sense than that to which, in the statement of his *own* view, he adheres?

“To proceed, however, to the main question. Whether we agree with the generality of philosophers in regarding the infinite and the absolute as one, or, with Sir William, look on them as distinct species included under the genus

of the unconditioned, is that philosopher right in asserting that this unconditioned, as postulated by all alike, can neither be known nor conceived by the human mind? That the unconditioned, as such, cannot be known nor conceived, he has, it appears to me, convincingly proved; since to know, to conceive, is to condition. Nay, further, I would venture to assert, that the absolutely unconditioned cannot *exist*; for existence, as an actuality, is only possible as combined with certain *suchnesses*, which are themselves conditions. But that the human mind can come into direct relation with, can conceive of and to a great extent *know* a Being, some of whose attributes, *e. g.*, that of duration, are absolutely unconditioned or infinite, Mr Calderwood has also, I think, most correctly maintained. Some will object, As all our conceptions of the Infinite Being must be finite, it cannot be said that we in any true sense know Him: the God whom we know is a finite God. But I think Mr Calderwood is quite right in maintaining, that while the human mind is incapable of rising to a full and definite conception of anything that is without the condition of finiteness, it may have an indefinite conception of that which is infinite; and this conception, so far as it goes, may be correct. I differ, however, from him in many of the arguments he adduces in support of this proposition, and some of these I shall now proceed briefly to examine.

“P. 39. ‘His [Sir W.’s] doctrine is, that “the Unconditioned (*i. e.*, the Infinite) is incognisable and inconceivable; its notion being only the negative of the conditioned (*i. e.*, the finite), which last can alone be positively known or conceived.” Sir William thus asserts that the Infinite is inconceivable, and yet, in the very next clause, he speaks of “its notion;” and it seems enough to defend the rather

glaring contradiction, that the notion is called a *negative* one. A *negative notion* is certainly a rather strange expression,' &c.

"P. 40. 'M. Cousin maintains that "the idea of the Infinite or Absolute, and the idea of the finite or relative, are equally real, because the notion of the one necessarily suggests the notion of the other." In answer to this, Sir William says, "Correlatives certainly suggest each other, but correlatives may, or may not, be equally real and positive. In thought, contradictories necessarily imply each other, for the knowledge of contradictories is one. But the reality of one contradictory, so far from guaranteeing the reality of the other, is nothing else than its negation. Thus every positive notion (the concept of a thing by what it is) suggests a negative notion (the concept of a thing by what it is not); and the highest positive notion, the notion of the Conceivable, is not without its corresponding negative in the notion of the Inconceivable. But though these mutually suggest each other, the positive alone is real; the negative is only an abstraction of the other, and, in the highest generality, even an abstraction of thought itself. It therefore behoved M. Cousin, instead of assuming the *objective* correality of his two elements on the *fact* of their *subjective* correlation, to have suspected, on this very ground, that the reality of the one was inconsistent with the reality of the other.'" Mr Calderwood declares that this reasoning is irrelevant. 'M. Cousin's position, as stated in the first sentence, is, that "the *idea* of the Infinite, and the *idea* of the finite are equally real," that both are *real ideas*. In his conclusion, Sir William asserts, that "M. Cousin ought not to have assumed the *objective* correality of his two elements,"' &c. Now, I agree rather with Sir William than

with Mr Calderwood as to what was M. Cousin's position. That the term *infinite* stands for a real idea—in other words, that it is not mere gibberish—there is no dispute;—therefore, Sir William is justified in speaking in the first sentence here quoted of the *notion* of the unconditioned, even though he maintains that the *thing*, whether real or not, is inconceivable;—the question is, Does it represent a mere abstraction, or a real and positive concept? Whether it do this or not, Sir W. has clearly shewn that M. Cousin's argument to prove that it does—namely, that the idea, &c., because the notion of the one necessarily suggests the notion of the other—is insufficient; because 'every positive notion,' &c. (Sir W.'s meaning, by the way, in this sentence, to which Mr Calderwood so much objects, I take to be, not that in each individual case the concept of a thing by what it is suggests its concept by what it is not; but that each abstract positive notion—*e.g.*, the conceivable—must involve the notion of its negative, the inconceivable); and thus the positive concept of a finite object no more implies the positive concept of an infinite *object* than the positive concept of a *conceivable* object implies the positive concept of an *inconceivable* one.

"P. 43. It is surprising that Mr Calderwood, who, in general, shews much quickness of intellect, should be so very slow to apprehend Sir William's meaning in the use of the term, 'negative thinking.' Let us turn to Sir William's Appendix, and read one or two paragraphs of page 578. '*Thinking* (employing that term as comprehending all our cognitive energies) is of two kinds: it is either negative or positive. Thinking is *negative* (in propriety, a negation of thought) when existence is not attributed to an object. In either case the

result is *nothing*. . . . Thinking is *positive* (and this in propriety is the only real thought) when existence is predicated of an object. . . . If both are fulfilled, we think *something*.' It is clear that when Sir William speaks of negative thinking as a negation of thought, he cannot mean that in the process (of forming such an abstraction as, for instance, non-existence) there is an absence of thought, but that in the *result* thought itself has been thought away.

"If Mr Calderwood objects to this, I would ask him if he admits there is any such true notion as the unthinkable; if so, do we attain to that notion without thinking? If not, yet do we in a proper sense think or conceive the thing itself—the unthinkable? Mr Calderwood is of course at liberty to object to the phrase *negative thinking*, if he can propose a better; but he should not write of the idea which Sir William intended to convey by the phrase, as if it were nonsense, and not, as it is, the soundest sense.

"P. 53. 'Let us direct attention to the process which Sir William traces as resulting in our notion of the Infinite, which is declared to be a mere negative notion. What is meant when it is said that our notion of the Infinite is obtained "by thinking away from, or abstraction of, those conditions under which thought itself is realised"? Let us imagine a finite object, and let us endeavour to "think away" from it the limits or boundaries which characterise it as finite. Now, as we have already shewn, in order to think an object existing, we must think it possessed of certain qualities. It is thus apparent that we can "think away" the qualities at present belonging to a body, only by thinking it possessed of certain other properties in their stead. If a body be

yellow, we can think away the quality of yellowness only by thinking it red, brown, or some other colour.' At this point I disagree entirely with Mr Calderwood. No material thing exists but has some certain size, form, colour; nor can we fully conceive any material image in the mind, without giving to it a certain size, form, &c. But I am decidedly of opinion—though here I am unsupported by philosophers generally—that we can, in an inferior but real sense, conceive an image in the mind without filling up all these particulars. I might write much in confirmation of my position; but shall content myself with a very few proofs. There is an acknowledged difference in different minds in the strength of the conceptive faculty. Some will, with far greater distinctness than others, call up an image. Now, if in every mind the image was filled up—if there was a definite outline (and we know that all existing things must have a definite outline), and every atom of the mass had a definite colour and shade assigned to it (and every atom as *existing* must have a definite colour and shade), and so on—how would any one such image be more distinct or vivid than another?

“ My second proof shall be drawn from a special psychological fact which has been much overlooked, but which has been brought home to me, as a matter of certainty, that persons whose conceptive faculty is weak, but their æsthetic *feeling* strong, may read through a work of fiction, feeling the intensest interest in many of the actors on the scene, thereby shewing that they do realise them as distinct entities; but who yet have no conception whatever of any form or features as belonging to these personages. They have imagined them acting, speaking, feeling—have perhaps put themselves in their place all

along—but have never assigned to them a definite outward appearance. The case of the blind, too, is quite in point. We cannot imagine that the blind have any conception of colour; but they assuredly have conceptions of objects; therefore, though colour is a necessary condition of real objects, it is not necessary to the conception of objects.

“Lastly, I would adduce in proof the varying strength in different minds of the idea of number. Thus, let us suppose ourselves entering a well-filled room. That room must have a definite number of people in it, and there are persons in whom the conception of number is so strong and accurate that they can at once perceive how many individuals are present; nor can *they* conceive of any collection of persons, perhaps, without mentally supplying a given number; but the ordinary mind would neither perceive this in the first instance, nor conceive it in the other, and yet would certainly possess a positive, though indistinct, perception and conception of the assembly. Now, that abstraction of certain conditions to which some minds are driven by their weakness may be possible to others (not all) by strength in another direction. I thus, for myself, positively deny the incapacity which Mr Calderwood ascribes to the race, of thinking an object *not green*, for instance, except by thinking it brown, or yellow, or some other colour. Sir William Hamilton evidently has this power of simply *thinking away* conditions, or he would not so often refer to it; for he is not the man to *take for granted* a capacity of this kind.

“Let us now apply this principle to the question we are treating. I think of an object, conceiving it of a certain size. I go on for a time enlarging my conception, but always defining it, till at last, having expanded

my conception to its utmost bounds (I am now viewing it, of course, subjectively), I drop, as it were, the idea of limit altogether, and thus attach to my conception the negative idea of illimitation or infinitude. This does not seem to be the same as an idea of the indefinite. As I said above, we may have an (imperfect) idea of a finite object without any *defined* limit—that is properly an *indefinite* idea; but, in this second case, I not only attach no particular outline to my object, but I abstract from it entirely the idea of outline or bound. I believe, therefore, that, so far as the idea of the infinite is a mere negation, we may not only form it in our minds as an abstract notion, but we may really attach it to a certain object, material or immaterial.

But, it may be objected—returning to the process detailed above—you conceived your object up to a certain length; you grasped it in your mind; but at last you let it go, after first depriving it of finiteness. That object extends immeasurably beyond the sphere of your conception; that portion of its existence, therefore, you have not conceived. This, of course, I must admit. All that I can say, therefore, is, that I may have had certain true notions of an infinite object apart from its infinitude: in so far as this is a positive attribute, I have not conceived its *infinity*—not, therefore, fully conceived the object itself. It is here that Mr Calderwood appears to me to be at fault. His theory of the impossibility of thinking away one positive quality without thinking another, has led him to draw from the fact, that we can and do think certain objects as *not finite*, the false conclusion that we have conceived them as positively infinite. Now, while the only notion *we* can form of the infinite is merely negative, I believe—nor does Sir William him-

self contradict the assertion—that there is a notion of the infinite which is positive, and infinity is itself a reality. But of this we can only speak as of the unknown quantity in algebra: the Divine mind alone, we may presume, can compass it as an actuality. To this *reality* of the Infinite, natural religion bears witness. Thus, not only will God exist for an eternity to come, but at this moment He has existed from eternity: His age is infinite. Not only *will* there be no limit to the ideas of the Divine mind, but, as an eternal past and an eternal future are ever present to that mind, the ideas it now and ever contains are infinite. This positive idea of the Infinite is by us *utterly* unattainable. This being the case, it is perhaps correct to say that we do not know the Infinite. To know the infinite God, and to know the infinite in itself, are two distinct things. This distinction seems to have escaped Mr Calderwood. He frankly admits that we do not know the Infinite in all its extent; but he maintains that ‘we have a knowledge, to some extent, of the Infinite.’ But just as a blind man may know, love, and cherish many visible objects, but does not in the least know or conceive the visible, so may we know and love the infinite God, and yet, so far as any *positive* conception is concerned, be utterly destitute of a knowledge of the Infinite. But also, as the blind man may, in another and most satisfactory sense, *know* that there is such a *reality* as the visible, so may we, the finite, know that there is an infinite God.

“I turn now to a particular train of argument, instituted by Sir William Hamilton. ‘We cannot,’ he says, ‘conceive either an absolute commencement, or an absolute non-commencement of time or existence; yet of these contradictories one must be true.’ He reduces the

idea of cause to the first impotence, which appears violated by the Libertarian view; while that of Necessity overlooks inconceivability of infinite non-commencement. Both are unthinkable; but the former has the express affirmation of consciousness. Let us now examine if both be equally unthinkable. The truest view I have met with of Time and Space (which, you will see, I owe to Elizabeth) regards them not as realities, but as ever-unrolling possibilities. We may, by the process of abstraction, do away with all existence, even that of the Supreme Himself, and still these two infinite possibilities will remain intact. Let us take now the idea of Time. Its notion precedes that of existence, as possibility precedes actuality, and this possibility cannot be limited (in other words, time cannot be supposed to begin or end) but by means of its opposite—*i. e.*, an impossibility of existence. Now it is impossible to conceive an abstract impossibility, because, to be conceived at all, a thing cannot be conceived of as abstractly impossible. This constitutes the one inconceivability, which we perceive to be an absolute one, and to apply to the Creator as well as to the creature. No intelligence ever can conceive time beginning or ending, because time, in its very nature, is an unbeginning, unending possibility; and that which is absolutely inconceivable, we may well say is not. Let us pass now to the other inconceivability. We cannot conceive time as not beginning or as not ending. Now, if we apply the process before applied to extension to this other species of quantity—protension—I think we shall see that, while we cannot conceive—that is, grasp in our minds—this inexhaustible possibility which we call time, we *can* attach to it the negative notion of inexhaustibility—nay, we must so conceive of

it, and are by no means driven to the expedient of choosing between two equally unthinkable hypotheses.

"If my reasoning here is sound, the argument to which logic drove Sir William, as a last resort, independent of the moral argument (which I do not here consider) to prove the liberty of the will, is taken away. The human mind is not 'impotent' to conceive absolute commencement of created objects. Just as by keeping in abeyance certain powers of the mind, we may form an image wanting the physical conditions of form and colour, so may we form one without the metaphysical condition of inhering as an effect in a deeper reality which is its cause. But, as in the former case, the mind fully exercised perceives the essential necessity of the subtracted physical qualities, so does it by a peculiar faculty—that of causation—refer all derived objects to an original, a something beyond and behind them in which they exist. For Mr Calderwood has well pointed out, that the causal judgment not only seeks to account for change or beginning of derived existence, but for continuance or the absence of change. Now, the Libertarian system, which represents millions upon millions of distinct phenomena (creature volitions) as starting, unconnected and uncaused, from chaotic nothing into life, appears to me to be compatible only with the voluntary or involuntary abnegation of one of the highest faculties of the human intellect; whereas the doctrine of Necessity represents that to which the human faculties inevitably point, if they do not attain. The one system contradicts reason, the other transcends it."

CHAPTER XXIV.

EXTRACTS FROM FRIEDRICH SCHELLING.

“ P. 26. ‘ In the last and highest instance there is no other mode of being (*Seyn*) than willing. To will is to have a spring of being (*Urseyn*), and with this alone fit in all the attributes of being—self-existence (*Grundlosigkeit*), eternity, independence of time, self-assertion.

“ P. 29. ‘ The real and living idea (of freedom) is, that it is a power for good and evil. This is the point of the deepest difficulty in the whole doctrine of freedom . . . which all systems treat. But certainly the strangest of all is the idea of immanation; for either there is a real evil supposed, when it is inevitable that evil be placed in the infinite substance or original will, whereby the idea of an all-perfect Being is entirely subverted, or in some manner the reality of evil is denied, whereby at once the real conception of freedom vanishes. Not less, however, is the difficulty if, between God and the universe even the remotest connexion is assumed; for if this is limited to the mere so-called *concursus*, or that necessary co-operation of God, in order to the action of the creature, which, in virtue of the dependence of this last upon God, must be assumed, though freedom be also maintained, in this case God still appears undeniably the co-author of evil, since permission in the case of an entirely dependent being is not much better than co-ope-

ration, or there must equally be, in one fashion or another, a denial of the reality of evil. The proposition, that all that is positive in the creature comes from God, must also in this scheme be asserted. Let it then be assumed there is in evil something positive; then this positive thing comes from God. To this it may be replied, The positive element in evil, so far as it is positive, is good. By this, evil is not done away with, though neither is it explained. For if that which really *exists* in evil is good, whence comes that wherein this existing thing is, the basis which properly constitutes the evil?' He then considers the notion, which he maintains was Spinoza's real view, that evil is only a negative thing, a lesser good; but asks, if the positive thing which comes from God be freedom, or a power to choose evil (or lesser good) as well as good, how can a power for evil come from God? He then turns to Dualism. 'But this system, if it be really conceived as the doctrine of two distinct and opposedly independent principles, is a system of mental dislocation and desperation. Yet, if the evil principle be in any sense regarded as dependent on the good, then the whole difficulty of the flowing of evil out of good is concentrated indeed in one Being, but is thereby increased rather than lessened. Even should it be assumed that this second being was first created good, and by his own fault fell off from his original being, still does the first capacity for God-opposing action in all former systems remain inexplicable. Then if one should finally do away with not only the identity but all connexion of the universe with God—its whole present existence, and thus consider the world as separated from God—this separation must either be an involuntary one on the side of things, but not on the side of God; and

thus it was through God they passed into wretchedness and evil; and God is, therefore, the Author of this condition. Or it is involuntary on both sides, perhaps caused by excess of being, as some express it: quite an untenable proposition. Or it is voluntary on the side of things, a severment from God, therefore the consequence of a fault; then this first fault was in itself evil, and furnishes, therefore, no explanation of the origin of evil.'

"Having thus stated the difficulties of other systems, he soon after gives his own, which, to a certain extent, I shall seek to condense here, always using his own words. Natural philosophers have distinguished between being as it exists, and being as it is a foundation of existence.

"P 37. 'As nothing is before or out of God, He must have the foundation of His existence in Himself. To this agree all philosophers; but they speak of this foundation as of a bare idea, and do not make it anything real and actual. This ground of His existence which God has in Himself, is not God absolutely considered, for it is only the ground of His existence—it is *nature* in God—an entity inseparable from Him, indeed, but still distinct. There is here no first and no last, for everything mutually presupposes, and is presupposed; nothing is the other, nor can be without the other. God has in Himself an inner ground of existence, which so far precedes Him as existing; but then God, on the other hand, is the *Prius* of the ground; while the ground, even as such, could not be, if God did not *actu* exist. . . . With respect to things, the idea of a becoming (*des Werden*) is that which alone consists with the nature of things. But they cannot become in God, absolutely considered, because they *toto genere*—or, more properly speaking, infinitely—differ from Him. In order to be

separate from God, they must originate in a different foundation from Him. But as nothing can be out of God, therefore this contradiction can only in this way be reconciled, that things have their ground in that which in God is not *Himself*—*i. e.*, in what is the ground of His existence. If we desire to bring this nearer to human apprehension, we may say, it is the longing which the eternal one feels to produce itself. It is not that one itself, but is co-eternal with it. It desires to produce God, that is the unfathomable Unity, but so far is not itself Unity, &c., &c. But because this entity [Wesen] (original nature) is nothing other than the eternal ground of the existence of God, it must, therefore, contain within itself, though concealed, the being of God, as a bright life-glance in a depth of darkness. But the longing, when aroused by Reason, still strives to retain within itself the life-glance which it has seized, and to shut itself up within itself, so that there ever remains a basis (Grund).'

"P. 46. 'Man by this, that he springs from the basis, has in himself a principle which, relative to God, is independent; but by this, that even this principle—without, on this account, ceasing on the side of the basis to be dark—is glorified in the light, a higher thing arises at the same time in him, the Spirit.'

"P. 47. 'But in the uttered word the Spirit manifests itself—*i. e.*, God as *actu* existing. As the soul is the living identity of the two principles, it is spirit, and spirit is in God. Was the identity of both principles (light and darkness) in the spirit of man as indissoluble as in God, then there were no distinction—*i. e.*, God, as Spirit, would not be made manifest. That union, therefore, which in God is indissoluble,

must in man be dissoluble; and this is the possibility of good and evil. The *actuality* of evil is quite another subject of investigation. That principle, emerging out of the ground of nature, whereby man is different from God, is selfity. . . . By selfity being spirit, it rises out of the creaturely into the super-creaturely; it is will, which contemplates itself in the most perfect freedom, and is no more an instrument of the universal will operating in nature, but is above, and external to, all nature. As it is spirit, selfity is free of both principles (light and darkness). But this selfity or self-will is only spirit, and thus free or above nature, as it is really changed into the original will (the light). But as it has spirit, if this is not the spirit of eternal love, selfity can separate itself from the light, or the single will can struggle to be as a particular will that which it only is in identity with the universal will—to be that which it only is while remaining in the centre also in the periphery—as a creature.’

“ P. 61. ‘ We have deduced the idea and the possibility of evil from the first foundation, and sought to develop the common basis of this doctrine, which lies in the distinction between the existing and that which is a ground of existence. But the possibility does not include the reality, which is properly the most important subject in the investigation. As it is an undeniable actuality, there can be no doubt it was necessary to the manifestation of God. For if God as Spirit is the indissoluble union of the two principles, and the same union is only realised in the spirit of man, then if they in this last were as inseparable as in God, man would not be distinguished from God; he would be lost in God, and there were no manifestation and going forth of love. For

every entity can only be revealed by its opposite, love by hatred, union by division.'

" P. 63. 'Man is placed on that summit where he possesses the source of self-determination equally towards good and evil; the union of the two principles in him is not a necessary, but a free one. He stands at the parting-point: whatever he chooses, it is his own deed; but he cannot remain in uncertainty, because God must necessarily reveal Himself, and because in creation generally nothing doubtful can continue. Yet it seems as if he could not come out of his uncertainty, just because it is uncertainty. There must, therefore, be a common ground of solicitation, temptation to evil, were it only to make the two principles living ones within him—that is, to make him conscious of them. Now it appears [at first] as if the solicitation to evil must itself spring from a bad foundation.'

" P. 64. 'But we have once and again shewn that evil, as such, can only arise in the creature, because only in it can the two principles of light and darkness be united in a separable manner. The primary basis cannot be evil, because in it there is no duality of principles. Neither can we assume a created spirit who, himself fallen, should tempt man to his ruin; for how evil first arose in the creature, is the very question we have to answer. We have nothing given us, therefore, for the explanation of evil but the existence of the two principles in God. God as a Spirit (the eternal union of both) is the purest love; but in love there can never be a will towards evil. But God himself, that He may be, requires a ground, which, however, is not out of, but in Him, and has in Him a *nature*, which, though belonging to Him, is yet distinct from Him. The will of love and

the will of the basis are two distinct wills, which each exists apart; but the will of love cannot resist the will of the basis, nor do it away, otherwise it must resist itself. This sufferance of the basis to operate, is the only thinkable idea of permission, which, in its usually maintained relation towards men, is completely untenable. Nor can the will of the basis violate love, nor desire it, though it may often appear to do so.'

"P. 76. 'The usual idea of freedom, which represents it as a completely undetermined power, to choose one or the other of two contradictorily opposed things without any determining grounds, simply because it has been willed, has, indeed, in idea, the sanction of the original indifference of the human being; but, when applied to particular applications, leads to the greatest absurdities. To be able, without any actuating motives, to decide between A and —A, were, to tell the truth, only a privilege to act quite irrationally, and would scarcely, to his advantage, distinguish man from the beast of Buridān, which, according to the defender of this notion of freedom, was obliged to starve between two heaps of hay equal in point of distance, size, and quality, just because it had not this privilege of free-will. The only argument for this idea rests on the fact, that, *e. g.*, every one has it in his power to draw in or stretch out his arm, without any further motive; for if you say he extends his arm just to shew his free-will, he might have done this as well by drawing it in; the motive to prove his position can only determine him to do one or the other. This, therefore, is a case of indifference, &c.—A perfectly vicious mode of argumentation, as it founds on *ignorance* of the determining reason its non-existence. . . . Accident is impossible, is opposed to reason, as the necessary unity

of the whole; and if freedom is only to be rescued by means of the completely accidental character of particular acts, it is not to be rescued at all.' He then speaks of determinism, or the doctrine of ordinary necessity, and says, if there were no higher system than either, the latter were undeniably the preferable.

"P. 78. 'Idealism has been the first system to raise the doctrine of freedom to the region where alone it is intelligible. The rational being of every essence, and especially of man, is, according to it, external to all causal connexion, as external to, and beyond all time. It can never, therefore, be determined by anything which goes before it; for it rather itself precedes every other thing that is, or becomes in it, not so much as relates to time as to conception, as absolute unity, which must ever have been whole and complete, in order that the particular act or determination in it be possible. But if this idea be assumed, it appears that the following may justly be inferred therefrom. The free act proceeds immediately from the rational nature (*Intelligibel*) of man. But it is necessarily a determinate act—*e. g.*, a good or a bad one. But from absolute indetermination to the determined there is no transition.'

"He then unfolds his own view.

"P. 81. 'Man in his original creation is, as has been shewn, an undetermined being; he himself alone can determine himself. But this determination cannot occur in time; it coincides with what is out of all time, and, therefore, with the first creation, although an act distinct from it. Man, though born in time, was created in the beginning of creation—the great centre. The deed, whereby his time-life is determined, does not itself belong to time, but to eternity. It does not precede life

nor time, but runs through time, unseized by it, as a deed, according to its nature, eternal. By means of it the life of man reaches to the beginning of creation; therefore, he himself by it is out of the created, is free, and himself an everlasting beginning. However inconceivable this may appear, according to ordinary modes of thought, yet is there in every man a feeling harmonising therewith, that what he is he has been from all eternity.'

" P. 82. 'That Judas should be the betrayer of Christ is what neither himself nor any other creature could change; yet did he not betray him by constraint, but willingly and in complete freedom. This free act, which becomes a necessity, cannot, indeed, present itself to consciousness, as it precedes and forms it as well as being; but still it is not an act of which man retains no consciousness whatever, since he—who, perhaps, in order to excuse an unjust action says, After all, that is what I am—knows very well, that it is by his fault he is so, however truly he may say that it was impossible to him to act otherwise. As in creation there is the utmost harmony, and nothing of that separation and succession which we are obliged to assume, but the later co-operates with the earlier,' &c.

" P. 86. 'There appears to be but one ground of objection which may be adduced against this view—this, that, for the present life, at least, it precludes all change on the part of man from evil to good, or the reverse. But let it be the case that human aid (some aid man always needs) determines him to the change to good, yet this very thing that he lends himself to this operation of the good, and does not positively shut it out, was included in that original act whereby he is what he is, and nothing else. Therefore, in the man wherein this trans-

mutation has not already taken place, but in whom the good principle has not fully expired, the inner voice of his (as respects himself as he now is) better nature never ceases to incite him; so that it is only by an actual and determining change he can find peace in his inmost nature, and, as if he were now doing satisfaction to the original idea, feels reconciled with his guardian angel.'

"I have given a good deal, you see, that is not Schelling's own views. The truth is, his *forte* lies, I think, in refuting others rather than in presenting anything preferable himself. How well he shews, for instance, the inadequacy of the ordinary theory of God's *permitting* evil as to freeing Him from participation in it. And how forcibly does he point out the impossibility of the transition from absolute indetermination to determination. In order to determine, man must be himself determined. But how extraordinary, on the other hand, the method by which he himself gets out of the dilemma! He thinks it required by equity, and that feeling of responsibility which man possesses, that he should have been created indifferent towards good and evil—for freedom that he have a power of choosing either; but how, as he himself asks at another time, can he pass from indifference to volition? Is it by something within himself, or something without? If the former, where is the indifference? If the latter, where the freedom?—according to Schelling's view, not mine. If that outer solicitation he speaks of necessarily prevails—and one would think he must maintain so, or he would not thus account for the universality of sin—this temptation being certainly in its origin external to the will—in other words, the creature not being able to help it—what is the difference, so far as responsibility is concerned, between an indifference which

necessarily gives way to a bias, and a primitive necessary bias? If this solicitation is not necessary—or if, as seems to be Schelling's view, while necessarily yielding to it to a certain extent, the spirit can, in its half-conscious state, choose to have that darkness more or less transmuted into light by union with the better spirit—how came one spirit to choose this and another not, if there was no original difference between them? The intellectual difficulties in free-will are not in the least diminished by being put back to a time beyond all time. The truth is, Schelling was misled throughout by two erroneous notions, to start from, in which he constantly persisted. The first, that it marred the purity and perfection of God to have anything to do with evil; the second, that for freedom it was necessary there should be no bias. There can be little doubt that his fanciful scheme was mainly framed in order to provide a solution for those two great problems—the reconciling of the existence of evil with the moral perfections of God, and human freedom with cosmal necessity. With respect to the first problem, we have seen his objections to other theories, and find that he himself holds that, 1. Evil is a positive thing; and, 2. It is entirely unconnected with the will of God. It is difficult to see how this differs from that Manichæan doctrine of two eternally contrary principles, which, however, he repudiates as utterly untenable. Schelling, indeed, did not believe in two gods, but in one, and that a perfectly holy one; and yet, as in order to reconcile the perfections of this one holy Being with the undeniable existence of evil, which he believes to be impossible under the supposition of any derivation of the human will or moral nature from God, he actually gives these an independent and eternal

foundation—he thus turns his Christiano-deism into a species of polytheism; for under his hypothesis would not men be gods—self-existent beings? Indeed, while Schelling maintains in a sense that nothing can exist out of the Deity, when we learn what this Deity is in which the creature exists, and how in other places he terms it Nature and the One Substance (*das Eine*), and how it is external to the personality and the will of God; and how, on the other hand, he regards the so-called *creature* as possessing longing, and selfity, and spirit, and—that which contains more of existence than anything else—*will*, entirely independent of God as *actu* existing, there remains little in the problems of the universe to necessitate the hypothesis of a personal God at all; nor, therefore, as accounting for actuality and satisfying the *intellect* (as respects the heart it is far better), does Schelling's scheme appear much superior to Atheism.

In order to reconcile his second supposed necessity with that which he so clearly saw that the will should have something to determine it—which something must be in the man himself, and yet not in the man before he willed—he fell upon the extraordinary expedient, the annulling of what is involved in the primary idea of time, *i. e.*, succession. According to him, the character which succeeded the will prompted that will, yet that original will formed all the future character. If a man is to maintain such absurdity as this, I should deliberately say, he might as well assert that one and two make four. Because one segment of the great eternity has been insulated and called time, and Schelling deals of things which he supposes to have taken place in the eternity beyond that, therefore he seems to think himself at liberty to violate our necessary conceptions of abstract

time. Thus he speaks of a becoming—a creation—nay, a producing of God himself; all which ideas *necessarily* suggest that of an eternity preceding these several acts or occurrences. But no! These things date from the beginning—that is, there was no time before them. Now, I am far from denying the existence of such a gift as intuition; but I do deny that the working of any genuine gift of God can be traced in the production of sheer nonsense. Every separate intellectual power has its own province: the sense of sight judges of visible objects; that of hearing, of sounds; the musical faculty takes in a range of feelings all its own, which cannot be adequately translated into another sphere; but no faculty contradicts another, all is harmony in the works of God, and this harmony which is so conspicuous elsewhere will certainly not be wanting in the sphere of the highest and most important truth. Intuition may inform where the reasoning faculty is silent—it may elevate the soul to a sphere where reason cannot soar; but assuredly it will not intrude into reason's own domain, and contradict its plainest assertions. Schelling was doubtless a man of splendid abilities; but, so far as the elucidation of truth was concerned, they were worse than useless, for the want of a little common sense in their application; for common sense is the unreplaceable foundation of much that rises far beyond its region. This sole work of his that I have read, but which, I imagine, may be taken as a fair specimen of the man, I should describe as a tissue of fascinating nonsense—fascinating, by dint of the grandeur and beauty of many of the separate ideas, but nonsensical on account of the inconsistency and inconceivability of the scheme as a whole.

“I shall make one or two cursory remarks on some of

the above translated propositions, before entering on a train of more general observation. When Schelling asserts, 'Were the identity of both principles in the spirit of man as indissoluble as in God,' &c., a sentiment repeated a little further on, he falls into the gross error of confounding similarity with identity. Two inanimate objects might be so perfectly similar that no eye could distinguish them apart, but they would be no more identical than the most diametrically dissimilar; and, when they were together, this duality would be clearly perceived by difference of *position*. Thus, though a created being should be morally perfectly like God, there would be no danger on that account of his being confounded with his Creator.—It is a mistake very usual (Mr Erskine and his school are greatly chargeable with it) to confound metaphysical with moral freedom. There are a few traces of this in Schelling; thus, when he begins by saying, selfity is spirit, thus, super-creaturely free, he understands freedom in the former of those senses; but when he says that self-will is only free, as it is changed into the Original will, he surely alludes to that moral freedom which the lower member enjoys when it willingly co-operates with the head. This freedom is quite incompatible with indifference; therefore it answers not to the Libertarian notion of free-will. It has nothing to do with spontaneity; for opposition to the Supreme will may be as spontaneous as coincidence, and, therefore, concerns not the matter of freedom as understood by Necessitarians. It is in itself a blessed thing, and well deserves the name of freedom, which, indeed, is assigned to it in Scripture; but all reasoning is futile which, in argument, confounds it with either of the other notions of liberty.

“If Schelling’s *liberty* is inconceivable, his necessity is very far-fetched and painful. That a single act of will in the far eternity should have so determined all the particular volitions and acts of a lifetime, inconsistent and vacillating as these often appear, is certainly difficult to believe. But, it may be said, man always acts according to his nature. Yes, certainly, according to his nature at the time being; but that nature is ever changing: it acts on the will, and the will reacts on it; and outer circumstances, and the influence and the will of other men, and of spirits good and bad, and of God himself, are ever modifying it. All this has been, indeed, determined before the foundation of the world; but not, I imagine, by any *one* act of God himself, seeing it was the product of an infinity of inferior causes. And though this scheme were possible, how melancholy would it be! Surely the dreariest of fatalities to have one’s destiny shut up by our own dateless and unconscious, or scarce conscious, resolve! A puny and inharmonious scheme also, as it seems to me, which, to be consistent, should make the universal order and harmony a thing of perpetual contrivance and patchwork; while yet the undeniable width and grandeur of Schelling’s ideas comport not with such an explanation.

“I spoke with approbation of some of Schelling’s separate ideas. That of a pristine state of innocence in a pre-existent state, is one to which I have long inclined, unconnected, however, with any of his super-creaturally notions. The doctrines of freedom and necessity remain quite unchanged by such an hypothesis; but there is something pleasing and natural in the thought, that every individual essence, as it first springs from the creative hand, should be innocent; there is no ground

in Scripture, any more than reason, for the soul's being supposed to begin to *be* when it enters this body ; on the contrary, there are, I believe, traces in revelation of another belief, and when the Scriptures are better unfolded, these may multiply. In the Soofee poetry, which keeps so close in other things to the ancient primitive tradition, this doctrine of pre-existence abounds.

“ What is most attractive in this scheme of Schelling's is the attempt to account for the conditions of all actuality by certain grand elementary powers, and the calm and complete satisfaction which the author himself feels in the solutions he offers. The causal judgment is a highly useful and honourable faculty of the human mind. It appears to have been given to raise us up to the one real power in the universe. We feel that we exist ; we see that other entities do so ; we are conscious that it was not by our own power we began, or continue, to exist and to energise ; and we conclude the same with certainty of the other finite existences around us. Hence we are led to infer some great power behind all these manifestations to account for them. In another view, we may be said to be thus getting nearer and nearer to *reality*. Thus, I see a tree that has been felled. Here is an effect of which I seek the cause. First, I may think of the axe : in a certain sense it has power ; then of the hand that wielded the axe ; then of the will which prompted the hand ; and, finally, of the moral and intellectual being which dictated the will. Here I have a succession of links of which each is a cause, as relates to what is below ; an effect, as related to what is above it. But these all conduct me to a Cause which is no effect—the great Reality from which all other reality springs. When we arrive here, causality has finished its proper

work; for we can find behind this no greater power, no greater reality. We can only sink from the summit of the real down the backward slope of the merely conceivable, bounded at the bottom by the boundless chaos of the inconceivable. But the faculty of causation, like every other natural power, tends, if strong, to be active when it should be passive. And thus the reflective man is apt to search for a reason or cause for the perfect accordance of fact with reason. In other words, he would explain why the character and attributes of God were in entire harmony with the eternal ideas of propriety, beauty, and sublimity. While some have sought to account for this, by making reason the cause of fact, and thus giving it an active potency which it could not as such possess, others have, perhaps, still more egregiously erred by making fact the cause of reason—*i. e.*, by making the *will* of God the cause of all moral and intellectual distinctions. What we must do is, to accept of both the fact and the ideas as ultimate, and in this way we can rejoice in both. Were abstract reason the cause of good in this sense, that beauty and propriety involved in their very idea the *fact* of a God and a universe such as we possess, we could scarcely rejoice in these last as we may now that we can contemplate them as separate. And if the fact caused the ideas, we could neither admire the one, nor delight in the other. We never shall be, nor need wish to be, able to account for the fact of God's existence along with its suchness; but we are bound, independently altogether of revelation, by the laws of parsimony and beauty, and by inference from the unity of design in the universe, to trace to this primeval fact all the other facts in creation. Now, Schelling neither traces reason to fact—*i. e.*, arbitrary will—

neither does he account for fact—*i. e.*, the Divine existence and suchness—by mere reason, or what is called the nature of things; for he seems to have felt that an idea can never account for a fact. But we gain little by what he gives us in return as the foundation of all, a certain vague and universal potentiality. Potentiality, so long as it is vague, can account for no actual result, because it can produce none. For it to produce any definite result it must itself be definite—*i. e.*, limited—and it can only be limited by an actual existence, in other words, by an existing being; for existence is as a reality impossible (it is only an idea), except as it itself exists *in* a being. No potentiality, therefore, which may be supposed out of the actual being of God (unless it exist in some other being) can account either for His existence, or the nature of that existence. Schelling erred, like others, in carrying causality out of its province; but while others theorise awake, he appears like one who, after following the clue of a distant light through long, dark winding passages, and at length reached the source of that light, a magnificent palace of beauty and wonder, instead of resting there in happiness and content, should weary himself beating against the further walls, that he may pursue his search, and at last, falling asleep, should continue his travels in his dreams. In distinguishing between existence as an actuality and existence as a potentiality, and making the latter the ground of the former, Schelling sets aside that axiom in logic which requires us to trace every effect, not only to a cause, but an adequate cause. Thus that very theory which is only explicable as an attempt to appease the insatiable demands made by the logical faculty, itself casts contempt on that faculty. I should be the last

man to speak slightly of this most important intellectual power, but I must agree with almost all who have thought on this subject, in maintaining that there is a point where it must rest from its labours, *its* work being done. There is at last a residuum of fact which must be simply accepted, not accounted for. And there is an intellectual faculty whose office it seems to be to receive ultimate truth, and to enable us to believe things without accounting for them. Phrenologists have discovered in the brain, the instrument of mind, and the index of its powers, a separate organ for this faculty—that of wonder. Now, I think it will be inferred from all candid and truthful study of the human constitution, that every original faculty is, when duly and only duly exercised, a power and not a weakness. Power in a certain view is only power when properly applied. That muscular effort which we should deem powerful employed to hurl down a mass of rock, we should not properly name so if used to rouse the infant from its slumber. Thus the faculty of wonder is not a power when it makes us receive that as an ultimate fact which we could believe by reasoning; far less is it so when it makes us believe by means of the one what we ought to *disbelieve* by means of the other. But for all this, wonder has its own region. I would even go so far as to say that it exists in the all-perfect mind of the Divine Being. Its region as respects it is that of strictly ultimate fact. With us it must deal with this fact so far as discoverable by us, and also with much that is not in reality ultimate, but which we must receive as such, not being able to account for it. At the same time, it is one thing to be affected by a truth as if it were ultimate fact, and another to believe that it actually is so. It is the problem of philosophy to reduce

the mass of this residual fact to its due limits; but not beyond them. It appears to me that a true and thoroughly satisfactory philosophy requires that this foundation of ultimate fact be a broad one, and not that almost imperceptible one which some would make it. It must be one that shall contain within itself in germ all the subsequent facts of the universe, to be clearly and logically traced back to it by connecting threads of reasoning.

“ Now, according to one view of his scheme, Schelling appears to me to reduce ultimate facts too much; according to another, not enough. If we take his ‘ground of existence,’ as distinguished from existence itself, as ultimate fact, containing in itself the causes of all that comes out of it, then we reduce ultimate fact too much; for mere ground of existence does not account for the nature of the existence—it does not account for God’s having certain attributes and not others. If it is said, certain attributes alone are consistent with the nature of things, with eternal propriety—this I allow; but while we are thus furnished with certain eternal *reasons* why existence should be as it is and nothing else, these reasons have no potency as active *causes*, and therefore cannot in the remotest degree account for facts as we see them. Indeed, the very reasoning shews we have sought to go behind ultimate fact to the causes of it, which is plainly absurd. Then, as to the creature. Schelling finds the ground of its existence in God, it is true; but in that part of God which is not Himself (to use his own expression)—that is, not in His will, nor, indeed, His proper being; because the creature is infinitely different from God. But if the above reasoning is true as to God, it must also apply to other beings. The ground

of existence, if it be not fact, does not account for fact. If, then, we take the ground of existence to be ultimate fact, we have an immense range of actuality independent of the will and proper being of God; which would be not only entirely contrary to revealed, but grossly contrary also to natural religion. If this is Schelling's view, he does not reduce ultimate fact enough. Schelling's is a development theory—a class of theories which possess two great charms; first, as gratifying the law of parsimony, requiring on starting to take so little for granted; second, as gratifying the law of progress, so much springing out of that little. But it is, as it appears to me, the fault of development theories generally, and of Schelling's in particular, that while they start, like inverted cones, by covering a very minute area of ultimate fact, and thus make but a small initiatory demand on the faith of their adherents, they are obliged, as the scheme enlarges, at every stage to lean on supports of faith resting on assumed ultimate fact, without any true primal unity.

“I am sure it will interest you to hear that my dear wife has been my associate in the study both of Sir William Hamilton and Schelling. We have had great delight in reading these works together, and not a few of the remarks here given were first suggested to me by her. With her permission, I send you a short paper written by her before our marriage, but I must thank you to return it in course of time.—Yours ever,

“F. SOMERS.”

ELIZABETH'S PAPER.

“President Edwards classes the eternal existence of being and the attributes of God under the same kind of

necessity as that which may be affirmed of mathematical truths; but, with due respect to so great an authority, to me they seem to be of a different character. The certainty of mathematical truths springs from the very conception of them. We cannot think of twice two objects without thinking of four objects. We cannot think of the half but as less than the whole. The necessity of mathematical truths results from the conception of the existence of space and time. And we cannot conceive the non-existence of space and time, because we cannot conceive their impossibility; and their very essence is their possibility. They themselves are only ideas of abstract possibilities; the one, of boundless extension—the other, of endless succession or duration. We cannot in thought do away with a possibility, except by conceiving of it as an impossibility, and that which is conceived of at all cannot be conceived of as a strict impossibility, *i. e.*, an inconceivability. But it is not so with the *fact* of existence. An actuality must be conceived of as more than conceivable, as *within* the conceivable and not co-extensive with it. The real must be surrounded by the conceivable that it may have a distinct character, that it may be itself and nothing else, just as body must be surrounded by space to have an outline, and to be body at all. We must, therefore, be able to pass away from the contemplation of existence to the idea of non-existence, still keeping within the conceivable. If there is truth in the above train of reasoning, it will follow that the great primal fact from which all others spring—the existence, including the attributes, of God—is not necessary in the first sense, of its contrary being inconceivable. And I rejoice to feel it is so, for otherwise how could those blessed facts give

us pleasure? It does not seem possible to delight in that which we cannot *conceive* of as absent. These truths seem rather to be necessary in the second sense, by an eternal certainty preclusive of negation. It has ever been impossible but that they should be true, because, at any point we may refer to of the past eternity, they *had* been for an eternity past, and as they were independent of all possibility of change, they were certain to be for an eternity to come.

“But after all, this necessity ends in a fact, and not in a reason. Are these all-important facts, then, ever to remain *only* facts for us? Is that imperative want in our nature which impels us to account for every fact, to be baulked when we come to those which themselves account for all the rest? Yes, it must be so; it is because they are themselves the reason of all the rest that no reason will ever be found for them. The reason of a thing must be more certain and necessary than the thing itself. But nothing is more necessary than the being and attributes of God except self-evident truth, which being shewn to be only the unfolding of abstract possibility—that is, conceivability—cannot be the ground of any actual existence; for the connexion between the ground of existence and existence is *necessary*, whereas conceivability connects itself as easily with non-existence as with existence.

“What, then, is the conclusion from all this? There are two conceivable possibilities, existence and eternal non-existence. Setting aside the argument from experience, how much more probable does the latter seem than the former! But the former *is*. What more can we say? What can we do throughout a long eternity but wonder and rejoice? And can it be, and yet how can

it not be, that the blessed God himself should share with us the joy of this mystery? May we not conceive Him as ever rapt in one continuance of calm but ecstatic wonder?—wonder at His own existence, wonder at His own matchless perfections, and at the wide and wondrous universe, the outgoing of these perfections!”

CHAPTER XXV.

GLORY OF GOD—OMNISM NOT HOSTILE TO PROPER INDIGNATION—OMNIST LIGHT THROWN ON THE GOSPEL SCHEME—CONCLUSION.

Frederic to Mr Graham.

"It often jars painfully on the spirit of the Omnist, after dwelling with rapture on what he believes to be the Divine scheme, to come back to the recollection, that to many a dear Christian brother it appears exaggerated even in its beauty. Though they would not acknowledge it even to themselves, we know that our representation of the character and designs of God is more agreeable than their own to many renewed and loving hearts, which yet dare not believe it to be the truth of God. Thence must ensue a painful struggle which we would fain spare them, and may almost be *glad* that, till they can receive the doctrine into their convictions, they should fail to perceive its full excellence. But we can only be satisfied with this as a temporary relief. When we have laid before them abundant evidence to prove our system true, we wish them to feel, in its full force, how much it is superior. When the new edifice has arisen firm and beautiful, we desire there should be no channels of escape left open to prevent the strong tide of conviction from rushing in and demolishing the ancient fabric.

“Of these modes of escape, perhaps one of the most effectual, and the most frequently resorted to, is furnished by such vague and erroneous notions as you, my dear friend, seem to me to entertain respecting the glory of God. When I read your words: ‘The creature is, I am sometimes afraid, all in your plan; its happiness paramount. Has the *Creator*, then, no claims? Are not *His* rights the first and foremost, and may not that other end be set aside to make way for this?’ I could not help mentally exclaiming, ‘Ah, my brother, thou art assuredly now aiming wide of the mark. Whatever we deny to God, we must not deny Him exalted virtue. And is exalted virtue consistent with a selfish aim?’ ‘Not in us,’ perhaps you will reply, ‘because we are so puny; but with God it is different. His happiness is, in reality, worth more than that of all the universe beside; and so may He deem it himself.’ To this supposed remark I shall not attempt a full reply. That God feels a direct delight in His own happiness, I have no doubt, for no being could be perfect without it; but equally am I persuaded that He who has taught the highest and holiest beings, as truly as the humblest, to make the happiness of self subordinate to that of the non-self (Jesus, we know, pleased not himself), will not find in His own perfections a reason for departing from the same rule. Divines generally have (as I deem rightly) agreed that God’s chief happiness springs from the good, physical and moral, of His creatures; and, in accordance with this, He has peculiarly appropriated to Himself the attribute of love. Will it be complained by you or others that this brings Him too much into dependence upon His creatures? How is it with ourselves? The wants of the heart, be they satisfied or not, are its truest

and best riches. Such dependence is nobler than independence. Besides, it is scarcely possible, after all, to conceive of an independent source of happiness. Certainly this is not secured in what is commonly designated *the glory of God*. This is a term which, I fancy, has been very much more used than understood. As employed in Scripture, it bears in different places quite different meanings. On these I need not enter. In one of its senses (as set forth by President Edwards) it embodies the most glorious of conceivable consummations—the communication of God himself, and of His communicable attributes, to an ever-widening universe. In a lower and more temporary sense, indeed, it describes the honour obtained by God in the punishment and destruction of His enemies. But what is the nature of the glory that He reaps from this source? Not the vulgar satisfaction of earth's selfish and ensanguined conquerors in a triumph obtained by mere force of will or prowess. His triumph, it will be allowed, is the triumph of justice and holiness. He may well delight in the honour and applause redounding to Him from an admiring and responding universe, from the vindication of these attributes. And we, on the other hand, can conceive ourselves feeling a high satisfaction in this triumph of the *right*, even though it involve the severe punishment of many of our fellow-creatures. But for this, it is necessary that that punishment be finite and proportioned to the offence. Adam Smith has shewn how, even on the principles of ordinary human nature, a wrath that ceases to be dignified and just, and becomes fierce and revengeful, cannot carry along with it the sympathy of the impartial spectator, which, on the contrary, turns into a recoiling indignation. How, then,

can we expect that it should produce any complacency in the just, calm minds of angels and of purified saints, if they saw Him who is possessed of all might wielding it eternally to crush and torture His foes, and never, never to reconcile and restore?

“It is fearful to think what distorted conceptions of the character of God have, by means of views like these, obtained currency in the world. Will you, dear Christian brother, continue to countenance the calumny? You have done so unwittingly hitherto, but henceforth it would be perhaps less innocently. If this letter leaves you still doubtful on the subject, I entreat you not to rest till, by singleness of heart, and earnest prayer to God for His guidance, you are led to some satisfactory conclusion. In matters of such solemn importance we are ever strongest and safest in clear certainty. Yet must we guard tremblingly against a certainty that may be termed *wilful*—the result not of satisfied, but of *stifled* conviction. This is far worse than a lifelong doubt. What is to be aimed at is a certainty *springing from conviction*. May you, my friend, attain to this! And I surely may be permitted to hope that this certainty will lead you far away from that fearful doctrine which, in my view, is alike so dishonouring to God and so inimical to man. Meanwhile at least, while any doubt remains, pollute not your lips with its utterance. Pause—pause long, ere you again repeat the threat of ETERNAL DAMNATION.”

Elizabeth to Mrs Merton.

“Thank you for sending me your friend’s letter. I am glad always to hear of attention being drawn to the subject, though no other good should in the meantime

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result. What do you say to the objection she makes, that she cannot but suspect there is some fallacy in the arguments, because the scheme seems to set aside as inappropriate feelings of indignation and wrath, which yet appear abundantly sanctioned in Scripture? *My* answer would be drawn from what I have witnessed in my husband. If your friend could see him, as I have done, with cheeks pale and lips quivering with wrath as he spoke of the horrors of slavery, or the abominations of despotic oppression, while his clear, rich, and *direct* voice uttered the strongest words of condemnation which the dignity of his nature would permit him to employ, she would see that Omnism has not dried up his power of indignation. Perhaps she would say, At the time he feels in this manner he is not an Omnist; and it is true that from the limitation of the human mind he cannot at that time be realising the Divine *idea* to which every being in creation will one day be assimilated. At that moment, indeed, the tyrant is to him only a tyrant, and as such must share his hatred of tyranny. But let him be reminded that the tyrant even is *not* only a tyrant, but that many-sided thing *a man*; let it be suggested that he shall be punished for his crime by *one hour* beyond his due; and his feeling for him will instantly turn into pity, and his anger be turned against his punisher. This he would feel for any one of his fellow-creatures—for Nero, for Satan, nay (for this is perhaps a stronger test still), for his most malicious human enemy. His indignation, therefore, is even at its height consistent with Omnism. But is it for that less noble, less godlike? I think not. It is, indeed, very much because his tenderness for man as such is so great, that I feel his wrath against man as the cold-blooded criminal is something

that would to me be awful, did not my own heart so passionately throb in unison with the feeling."

Frederic to Mr Bruce.

"MY DEAR MR BRUCE,—I am delighted at the opportunity you afford me of testing the power of my 'milder and more enlarged views,' in reconciling to evangelism a candid and interesting mind scared from it apparently by the seeming harshness and injustice of its elements. When leisure permits, I hope to discuss the question more fully and satisfactorily with your friend. In the meantime, I have jotted down a few thoughts which I should be glad you brought under his eye.

"No claim is stronger than that of dependence. As, therefore, each derived being depends entirely on its original, not only for the fact but the nature of its existence, from the beginning to the end of its course, supreme justice will secure to the creature that, if subject for a time to evil, moral and physical, it should, as an individual, in the end find this evil counterbalanced by equal good. This is all that justice can demand. It is true that God, as a perfect being, is more than just. He adds to justice which requires a balance, love which desires a preponderance, of good. But it must not be forgotten that love's demands are debts to love itself, not to its objects. The creature can ask nothing more than justice. Love, while, as being perfect, it embraces all creation, is yet perfectly free to have in addition special objects of favour, when it is bounty, and itself to choose which these objects shall be, when it is sovereignty. Love is free indeed; but, in the strictest sense, it cannot be arbitrary, as it must ever be directed by wisdom, and be at once animated and controlled by power. If we

may judge also by the analogies of the physical world, beauty and fitness put in their claim for some variety of apportionment of that overplus of good which follows the satisfaction of justice. It is not unlikely, indeed, that, in the end, variety may give place to a sublimer sameness, and self, though not individuality, be so completely lost, that the happiness of all shall be completely that of each, and, therefore, all be equally blest. But now we are speaking of the long, long interim.

“That is in theology a very useful distinction which is gained by our viewing things according to their anterior aspects, whereby the creature, considered purely as a derived existence, depends on its original for its moral qualities as well as its physical conditions; or, in a posterior light, as supposing the creature already possessed of a certain suchness of character. We may thus distinguish between anterior and posterior bounty; and if we cast our eyes abroad over the world, we shall see innumerable illustrations of both. If we embrace even the limited scope of mundane experience, we find some beings both morally and physically blessed far above what the claims of anterior justice would demand, and it is certainly the ordinary lot of man to be happier than he deserves. Natural religion hints, and revelation plainly declares, that eventually the better disposition will be such as to justify the better condition. But it is by its reversal of what may be termed the natural order in the bestowment of these blessings—by placing justification first, and sanctification second—that the scheme of grace forms so distinguished an exhibition of posterior bounty.

“It is this precedence of justification to sanctification which leads to a point I specially desired to consider—

the *condition* to which, in the Calvinistic scheme, salvation is maintained to be attached—namely, faith in the Atonement. Now, considering that this faith is physically impossible to a vast portion of the human race, and intellectually impossible to another class, I do not deny that this condition may, *primâ facie*, appear harsh in the extreme. And if either kind of justice hinged upon it at all, it really would be so; but if these are, as according to the scheme I deem scriptural they decidedly are, quite independent of it, and the question is one of mere bounty, I do not know that, if we go to the root of the matter, and look on every event as pre-ordained by God, every privilege, and *every denial of privilege*, physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual, traceable to His eternal decree, this condition involves a greater difficulty than any other that could have been imposed.

“ If we first accept of the doctrine of substitution, we shall see, I think, a peculiar fitness in the choice of faith, the principle which appropriates this substitution, as the formal condition of its attainment. If it be objected that faith, being an intellectual act, has in itself no moral excellence to fit it to be thus rewarded, I would reply that that is the reason expressly given in Scripture why it was chosen. ‘ It is of faith that it may be of grace.’ While very much of the happiness which accrues even to the unconverted man in this life springs from the Divine *love*, I do not think it correct to say it all does. In the high sense which I have treated of, some of it is really owing to His justice, as a balance to the other allotment of evil. It is certain that the idea often springs up in the natural heart that a good man deserves to be happy, and though the notion is clearly often carried much too far, yet it appears to me, to a certain extent, to rest on

truth. But if this same principle were applied to those more exalted blessings which the gospel promises and procures—its present riches and its future rewards—how lamentably, how ungratefully wrong would be the conclusion! It is easy to see how the attaching salvation, in the first place, to faith bestowed on man without reference to previous character, and the subsequent bestowment of spiritual graces, should tend, even as a mechanism, to obviate this fatal mistake, while in fact the renunciation of self-righteousness has always been considered by those Calvinistic divines who have studied the matter on its experimental side, as an elementary condition of the saved state.”

CONCLUSION.

As they were on their journey homewards from Ashburn, Mrs Merton said to her husband: “You remember, William, how you used to describe Mr Somers to me soon after our marriage. I seldom wished to know any one more, and I find him almost exactly what I had pictured him, which is not often the case. That is because his character is so *regular*. I divide characters into regular and irregular. The last are generally thought the most interesting, and heroes of romance are almost exclusively chosen from that class. But Mr Somers is a proof what enthusiasm, as well as satisfaction, may be inspired by a character that is regular, if it be also rich. Mr Somers’ personal piety has come out much more, I think, during this visit than during the one they paid to us. Does it not strike you so?”

“Well, I always had a very strong opinion of his personal piety.”

“I know you had. But I used always to find I agreed

so well with religious people; and with him I differed every night, and that a little puzzled me. I am sure, too, that the necessarily controversial character of our conversations kept the *personal* element a good deal out of sight."

Mr. M.—"Besides, you wanted then the advantage of those thousand nameless tests of a man's character which you gain when living in his own house. For instance, I had no idea how largely he subscribes to religious objects. Omnism has not curtailed his liberality, whatever else it has done. It was chiefly through his mother I learnt this. You know she is an outspoken woman; and, with no idea of ostentation or parade, she certainly takes pleasure in descanting on the merits of her son. She said, too, it was the greatest delight to her to find his wife so one with him in this respect."

Mrs M.—"They appear to me to be entirely one, both in the warmth of their zeal and the diffusiveness of their charity. But there is one difference between them which struck me. Mr Somers, though not in the very least conceited, has a good deal of confidence in himself before men, whereas before God he not only feels, as proved by his prayers, a strong self-emptying humility, but intense convictions of sin; whereas Mrs Somers—dear Elizabeth, I mean—who is naturally so diffident, does not appear to have nearly such strong convictions of sin, though her conscience is naturally very delicate."

Mr M.—"If it is as you say, and you are probably right, though I cannot say I perceived any such deficiency in Mrs Somers"——

Mrs M.—"Oh, I do not speak of it at all as a deficiency, but only as not being so characteristic of her piety as one might have expected."

Mr M.—"Well, if this difference which you describe really exists, it is one proof among a thousand of the sovereignty of the Spirit of God in His operations. He is not bound to conform, and, in point of fact, frequently does not conform, to the outline presented by the natural character."

When they were drinking tea in their own home that night, after a silence Mr Merton exclaimed, "They are a happy couple! I sometimes tremble to think *how* happy."

"Dear William, do not speak so! We do not know all their experience, you know. When they were with us, from their own complete exemption from such trials, they could have had no conception of the pecuniary anxieties which sometimes weigh us down to the ground. And we may be quite as unaware of some secret anxiety or deep inward want, which, in a measure, mars their happiness. I am quite sure, however, that their happiness is as perfect as it would be easy to find this side the grave. And that which chiefly constitutes it is unassailable by any storm, being built on the true rock."

Sophia Milwood to Elizabeth.

"With what delight do I look back to my visit to Ashburn! I felt so happy to witness the excellent understanding which exists between you and each member of your husband's family, and especially the affection between yourself and his noble mother. But it is your relationship *together*, and particularly the *ineffable repose* of each in the other which filled me with joy. I know, dear Mrs Somers, that you have often thanked God for sending you messages of reproof through your fellow-creatures; but still it is sweet that through your

husband He only sends you messages of love. You can say of him with the same certainty as David could of Ahimaaz, son of Zadok, 'He bringeth good tidings.' But what—will you allow me to say it?—appeared to me still more beautiful in your mutual affection was, its being so entirely unexclusive. That you love each other makes you not love other people less, but more. I think I hear you say, 'How could it be otherwise with Om-nists?' And you are right. Such is, indeed, the genuine tendency of the doctrine. Then there is this charming reflex result from particular affections of this character, that those which come within their immediate presence are, when of congenial spirit, instead of impoverished, enriched thereby. If our friend Mr Merton saw what I am writing, he would declare I had become at last a convert to matrimony. But this is not the case. If *you* had not married, it would have been a great mistake, and decidedly going out of God's way as well as your own; and, of course, this is applicable to a thousand marriages far less perfect. But to speak of that as the only proper sphere for woman, and thus lead her earnestly to desire it for its own sake, appears to me a misinterpretation of nature (nature which, in a high and wide view, is far more elective than comports with a notion such as this), providence, and revelation. Some would suppose this philosophising on my part a reaction from personal sorrow and disappointment; but your kindness and penetration will judge it more truly. I have often thought, dear friend, of your confidence respecting me that I should be blessed, though not in the same manner with yourself. Your trust has been amply justified.

"It is time that, in return for the gentle sympathy you so early accorded to sorrows of which I only hinted, I

" should give you a fuller confidence. When you first knew me, you judged rightly when you said, you thought that sorrow had been largely mingled in my cup. This could not fail to be when he, on whom with a long unchastened heart I had bestowed all the riches of my affections, and who idolised me at a time when neither of us knew *who* was our chief good, was snatched from me in the prime of life. Ah, I almost wonder now how I could *live* without my present hope concerning him. When I came to see the way of salvation through Christ, I perceived that he had certainly not found it, but had perversely followed his own devices. I could not believe him, therefore, among the blest. I feel sure I never realised the alternative. Yet sometimes an acute conception of it darted through me like agony. Now, however, how different, when beyond all I have a hope, a *certainly* to fall back upon! But I should not, nor do I rejoice in this blessed doctrine chiefly for any private hope or joy. I find, as you have done, that it has expanded, as nothing ever did before, my universal love. It has brought with it, indeed, a certain insulation of spirit. You know we wrote about this at the beginning. Some say there are very many who at heart are Universalists in this country. It may be so; but I have not discovered them. No; my experience still is this, that he who cannot still the yearning for his brother's sympathy, nor endure his brother's suspicion; he who cannot live in a solitude of the spirit, nor bear the weight of a secret, though it be one of love and joy; he who is not content with the loveliness of his own treasure, though by others it be slighted, nor with his own love and its future pure and perfect satisfaction, though it win no love in return, must not turn to Omnism. But he who has

braved all this, and examined into, and received the precious doctrine in its definiteness and plenitude, will find in it not the 'hidden hope' alone, the 'notice faintly understood,' which are too often overborne by the questionings of doubt and the contradictions of woe, but that steady flow of serene yet rapturous expectation, which a well-grounded faith alone can supply. With it he need not flee for beauty and for joy to the land of dreams, for reality itself will be transfigured in the light of a higher Reality. By it will love's most daring dreams be stamped with the sober certainty of fact, and reason's most unfettered requirements justified by distinct and harmonious realisation.

“ ‘ Wenn du Traumgeföhle suchst, sieh hier Traumgeföhle !
Wenn du Lichtgedanken suchst, sieh hier Lichtgedanken ! ’ ”

THE END.



